









**THE FOLKLORE OF  
FAIRY-TALE**





# THE FOLKLORE OF FAIRY-TALE

BY

MACLEOD YEARSLEY,

Author of "The Story of the Bible,"  
"A Fairy Tale of the Sea," etc.

*The superstitious, idle-headed old  
Received, and did deliver to our age,  
This tale.*

—MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

LONDON :  
WATTS & CO.,  
JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET, E.C.4  
1924

GR  
13  
Y31

Printed in Great Britain  
by Watts & Co., Johnson's Court,  
Fleet Street, London, E.C.4



TO MY  
WIFE-COMPANION AND  
HELPMATE  
LOUISE



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## PREFACE

I **MAKE** no claim to originality in this book. I have merely endeavoured to bring together in concise and popular form the salient points of the knowledge concerning the origin of fairy-tales that is to be found in numerous technical works, many of which are out of print or otherwise inaccessible to the reading public. I have given full references to authorities, and readily express my indebtedness to the many authors consulted, especially to Canon Macculloch for his ready permission to quote his valuable work.

MACLEOD YEARSLEY.

*October, 1924.*



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## CHAPTER I

### FAIRIES, FAIRY-LAND, AND FAIRY-TALES

"Midsummer's phantoms in her dreamy hours,  
King Oberon, and all his merry crew,  
The darling puppets of romance's view :  
Fairies, and sprites, and goblin elves we call them,  
Famous for patronage of lovers true."  
—HOOD, "The Midsummer Fairies."

#### § 1. *Introductory*

THE fairy-tale is our first introduction to literature. It is a primitive literature, abounding with enchanted princesses, heroic youngest sons, talking animals and horrid monsters; a literature which fascinates our early years, supplies our craving for the marvellous, and which we receive without question. These early years are, moreover, those in which inanimate objects seem to us as real and living as they were to our animistic ancestors—as they are to the modern primitive savage. Eagerly listened to at our most impressionable age from the lips of mother or nurse, the fairy-tale lingers with us throughout life. It holds a prominent place among those cherished memories of childhood which, stored in the subconscious mind, come back to us at odd, sometimes at critical, moments of existence. Some of us—the best, I venture to think—are not ashamed in maturer years to acknowledge a partiality for fairy-tales. Every real lover of children loves these stories; but there are some persons who profess to disdain them as childish nonsense—tales "told by an idiot, signifying nothing"—even though they may still feel a lingering affection for them in their secret hearts. But fairy-tales have a still more important claim upon us. Few realize that these romances of our childhood are something more than



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nursery stories full of absurdities and impossible incidents, designed to catch a vagrant attention or amuse an idle hour. The ordinary reader, like the child, is content to take them at their face-value—as interesting literature of a kind, pleasing a taste for romance, or tickling a fancy for the marvellous. But to the rational mind they are something more. Its spirit of inquiry spurs it to seek what hidden meanings lie beneath the surface, and to learn the knowledge that fairy-tales can bring as to the mental make-up of the men who first told them in the past. Inquiry reveals to us that the stories which please our children once equally fascinated their adult ancestors when the race was itself but in its childhood.

One of the great debts which we owe to students of folklore has been the collection and elucidation of folk-tales, and many volumes have been written upon this fascinating subject. These contain large masses of information about the legends of many peoples, and the fact which first strikes one is that most of them can be reduced to certain well-defined groups of narratives which are common to all races, although not infrequently disguised by local and other influences. We realize further that the underlying motives of many of these stories can be traced back for hundreds, even thousands, of years. That is to say, there exists a remarkable universality of type. The group of stories, for example, the central idea of which is the “separable soul”—the dwelling of the soul or heart, as the seat of life, in some secret place apart from the body—has variants in Indian, Norse, Gaelic, Russian, Saxon, Bohemian, Serbian, Tartar, Samoyede, and Arabian folk-tales, and is found as early as the fourteenth century B.C. in the Egyptian story of “The Two Brothers.” Hence, rightly to understand the true significance of the fairy-tale, the world must be ranged over and the folklore of its many peoples examined in order that such primitive types may be found as will give the clue to its origin. When this has

been accomplished, the first feeling of the inquirer is one of astonishment at the number of primitive customs represented in the fairy-tales upon which the dawning literary tastes of our childhood have for so long been fed.

The many books which have been written upon the genesis of our fairy-tales are not always within the easy reach of every reader, nor can he usually afford the time for the perusal of long and technical works. Moreover, they contain a wealth of detail which is sometimes so great as to leave the reader with that sense of bewilderment which is induced by literary indigestion. It will, therefore, be my endeavour to offer in this book such information, illustrated by examples, as will furnish an account sufficiently connected and comprehensive to enable the general reader to form a clear understanding of the true nature and meaning of the fairy-tales which were told him in his childhood, and which he, in turn, passes on to his own children. I shall, further, confine myself where possible to those tales which are current in the British Isles, either as indigenous to the country or as introduced and made popular by British writers. At the outset a distinction must be made between the true and the invented fairy-tale; that is to say, between the genuine folk-tale which can be traced back through the ages and has its variants in many countries, and the tale which has been invented with a literary purpose, such as the stories by Hans Christian Andersen, Lord Brabourne, and some by Mr. Rudyard Kipling. As Hartland<sup>1</sup> has pointedly remarked, "the science of fairy-tales is concerned with tradition and not with literature."

The first question to be asked is: Who or what are the fairies? The second is: What are fairy-tales? Both require answering in some detail, but the replies may be summarized briefly as follows. The fairies are, speaking generally, the lineal descendants of the gods and ghosts

<sup>1</sup> E. S. Hartland, "The Science of Fairy-Tales" (1891), p. 4.

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of our primitive ancestors, and our ideas concerning them are largely derived from primitive beliefs regarding the spirits of the dead. Fairy-tales, or folk-tales, are the myths told about these age-old gods and ghosts. Therefore, as I have pointed out in my "Story of the Bible,"<sup>1</sup> if we are to understand the origins of religions we must make a study of primitive man; so also, in seeking to learn how our fairy-tales began, we must turn in like manner to a past reflected by the primitive races of to-day, since these stories mirror the manners and customs of our primitive ancestors.

### § 2. *The Fairies*

In "The Story of the Bible" I have given a brief account of the conceptions formed by primitive man concerning the world around him—cosmic beliefs which are current among savage races still existing. I explained how man's first feeling in regard to his surroundings was of some mysterious, intangible nature-power. This condition is called *Naturism*, the root-idea of which is one of some vague, threatening power everywhere, inspiring a sense of indefinite but very real *fear*. At this period man had reached to no explanation of nature suggestive of anything *personal* in the way of spirits which were deliberately harmful to him. The world was not yet regarded as full of spirits, but as merely alive.

From *Naturism* man evolved to the stage of *Animism*, in which he conceived that all natural objects, animate or inanimate, possessed a nature like his own. Everything was as much alive as himself. This stage of *Animism* has exercised a very widespread influence upon the world, and has led to remarkable developments in superstition and worship, as will be shown in a subsequent chapter. Indeed, if one may judge from some of the writings of modern Spiritualism, it is doubtful whether civilized man has yet succeeded in shaking it off in its

<sup>1</sup> Watts; 1922.

most primitive form. It has an important bearing upon our present subject—the belief in fairies and the evolution of fairy-tales. Man, in the childhood of his existence, behaved like the civilized child of to-day, who considers his doll as alive and holds long conversations with it in that character. To the animistic savage every death adds another ghost to the spirit world—a ghost able to revisit the living, and possessed of supernatural powers for either good or evil. To him every tree and stone, every hill and river, has its spirit, while the air is full of visible and invisible beings. As Miss Cox says<sup>1</sup>: “Horror of the unseen fills the mind of the savage.” As an illustration of this savage survival in the child, whose psychological development is as much an epitome of his racial history as his embryological development is an epitome of his bodily evolution, Miss Cox cites an incident which came within her personal knowledge. A mother left her little daughter in bed with the consolatory remark: “You need not be afraid to be alone in the dark; remember God is in the room, He will take care of you.” Recalled by muffled screams, she found her offspring beneath the bedclothes in abject terror. “Oh! Mummy,” she whimpered, “please ask God if He would mind going away: He does frighten me so!”

It is from these spirits imagined by animistic man that have developed our fairies, sprites, elves, household spirits, hobgoblins, wild huntsmen, *et hoc genus omne*, usually more mischievous than spiteful. The offerings made to the fairies even now by some ignorant peasantry, and read of in fairy-tales, are the survival of the propitiatory sacrifices offered by primitive man to the spirits which beset him at every turn—sacrifices stimulated by fear. It is fear rather than gratitude that stimulates propitiation. The Chins, for example, believe in a legion of *nats* dwelling everywhere. “Kindly *nats* are ignored;

<sup>1</sup> M. R. Cox, “An Introduction to Folklore” (1897), p. 131.

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all others can and will do harm unless propitiated.”<sup>1</sup> Even many of our modern names for supernatural beings have their derivation in these primitive ideas; thus “bogie” and “bogle” come from the Welsh *bwg*, a ghost or goblin, possibly connected with the Slavonic *bóg*, a god. There is an Indo-European root having the form *bág*, or *bhág*, or *bóg*, which appears in old Persian, where it means “lord,” in Slavonic “god,” and in Sanscrit “divine” or “august.” In Gaelic a spiritual being of some sort is called *bocan*, and the whole of Scotland at the present day shows unmistakable signs of Welsh (Cymric) occupation.<sup>2</sup>

The conception that spirits may be benevolent or malevolent survives in the fairy beings of different peoples. Thus the *Jinn*, or *Genii*, of the Arabs, like the demons of the Rabbinical traditions, are beings who are not immortal, who can take the forms of animals or make themselves invisible, and who are divided into good and bad kinds. Similarly, the Persians have their beautiful *Peris*, good beings who are at war with the bad and ugly *Deevis*; and the northern races have their *White Elves*, who are friendly to man, and their *Black Elves*, the dwarfs and trolls who inhabit the hills and mounds.

One of the most potent objects of terror and superstition (and consequent veneration) to primitive man was *water*. In a world peopled by spirits it is easy to see how so important an element must have appealed to him, and how the spirit of the river murmured when it was pleased or roared when angry, dashing its waves against its banks and possibly breaking parts of the latter away. A wide-spread superstition with primitive man was that any person so unfortunate as to be drowned by falling into lake, river, or sea died not from natural causes, but at the hands of the spirit of the water, who seized and

<sup>1</sup> A. H. Keane, “Man: Past and Present” (1920), p. 185.

<sup>2</sup> I am indebted for this information to Colonel Norton Powlett.

strangled him. The continual motion of water very naturally suggested that it was alive, and in the folklore of every people abundant evidence is to be found of the belief in water-spirits. I have given examples of this belief in "The Story of the Bible." The river-gods and naiads of the springs, in whom the Greeks and Romans believed and whom they worshipped, survive to-day in other forms, many as patron saints of wells and springs. Those of them who were not adopted by Christianity as saints helped to swell the goodly company of fairies. They became the water-demons, water-piskies, water-nixies, mermaids, and water-maidens of sea, river, lake, and spring, once worshipped all the world over. In Britain the mermaids of Cornwall and the Lady of the Van Pool in Wales, both of which will be described in due course, may be cited as examples. Some of these water divinities are still venerated as such; the Red Indian believes in the spirit of the Mississippi, the Ganges is a divine river and reckons its yearly pilgrims by thousands, and the waters of the Neva were blessed annually in the presence of the Czar until Czardom ceased to exist. The Sutlej, the Yellow River, and other bodies of water also furnish examples. From the doctrine that those who fell into rivers or the sea became the victims of their tutelary spirits arose the superstition that it was unlucky to save men from drowning. In Britain the Lees, the Skerne, the Ribble, and other rivers, have each their sprite, demanding human or other animal victims. The Spey is spoken of as "She," and must have her victim yearly, while

Bloodthirsty Dee  
Each year needs three

is a folklore jingle which tells its own tale. The sprite of the Tees is "Peg Powler," a parallel of the Lorelei of the Rhine; and the froth upon that river is known as "Peg Powler's suds." So also local tradition gives to

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the spirit of the Ribble the name of "Peg O'Neill."<sup>1</sup> Another consequence of the belief in the dreaded water sprite was the propitiatory sacrifice of a victim whenever a bridge was built. An interesting example of the folklore of water-spirits is preserved in the Old Testament, that wonderful collection of tradition, poetry, and folklore, in the account of Jacob's wrestle at the Ford of Jabbok (Genesis, xxxii, 24-32).

The mysterious and gloomy hills, the forests, the very winds, were peopled with spirits who have supplied their contingent to the fairies, and to do more than mention them would swell this chapter beyond due limit. In Britain this is true especially of the Welsh mountains and Cornish hills. The devil's dykes, bridges, and leaps, of which our country possesses numerous instances, show the Christian influence which transferred to the devil the attributes of the evilly-disposed fairies who haunted them. A good example of this type of folk-tale is that of the Devil's Bridge at Mynach, near Aberystwyth, which tells how—

Old Megan Llandunach of Pont-y-Mynach  
Had lost her only cow ;  
Across the ravine the cow was seen,  
But to get it she could not tell how.

The devil (obviously an adopted pagan local sprite), disguised as a monk, built her a bridge whereby she could reach it, merely bargaining for the first living creature that crossed it. Old Megan foiled him by driving a dog across the bridge, and recovered her cow.

Among the spirits of the dead it is natural that ancestral ghosts should figure largely, and the Irish *Banshee* is probably derived from one of these. The worship of ancestors has held, and does still hold, a large part in the religious superstitions of man, as shown by A. H. Keane.<sup>2</sup> From them were derived the *Lares* of the Romans, spirits of good ancestors who watched over

<sup>1</sup> M. R. Cox, *l.c.*, p. 147.

<sup>2</sup> *l.c.*

the household, and the *Anses* of the Goths. It is, perhaps, in China that ancestor veneration has been most elaborated. Later they supplied many of the guardian angels and patron saints of the Christian system, ever ready to adopt popular pagan superstitions. The ancestor developed in fairy-lore into ghosts, hobgoblins, brownies, bogies, and household spirits who demand recognition and propitiation. Folk-tales abound in these, both well- and ill-disposed. In the Orkneys the Brownie is a family spirit requiring sacrifice; and all lovers of fairy-tales will remember how some small offering is left for the use of those industrious little household spirits who work while the good wife sleeps:—

For though they sweep their hearths no less  
Than maids were wont to do,  
Yet who of late for cleanliness  
Finds sixpence in her shoe?

Another class of the spirits of the dead comprises the *Elves*, a term used also of divine spirits generally. In later Christian times the elves sunk in Scandinavia to the ordinary meaning of "fairy," but they were once ancestral spirits, for, by the Northmen, the dead were called *Elves*, and were supposed to live in the hills, and more especially in barrows and burial places, sacrificial feasts being held in their honour. It will be remembered how in the famous ballad the Elf-king was Death.

The custom of burying the dead in barrows naturally led to the idea that such places were inhabited by the spirits of their occupants—a superstition directly derived from Animism. These ghosts, remotely ancestral, have also developed into fairies who in fairy-lore are frequently met with as haunting sites of primitive burial. In Denmark especially barrows are invariably considered as the haunts of fairies. The churchyard ghost (concerning which there are many quaint folk-legends) is similarly derived. *Vampires*, or souls of the dead who at night suck the blood of the living, are traceable to the buried



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barrow-ghost who could leave its resting place, kill, and eat, as described in many legends of many countries, of which the Danish tale of Asmund and Aswit is a typical example. All the vampire stories have developed out of facts concerning primitive cannibalism, and come chiefly from Slavonia and Hungary, the name being derived from the Polish *upior*.<sup>1</sup> Yet another monster of fairy-tale is the *Ogre*, who owes the derivation of his name to the Tartar invaders called "Oigour," or to "Ugri."<sup>2</sup> According to Miss Cox,<sup>3</sup> the Italian form, "Uorco," comes from *Orcus*, the ancient god of the underworld. This horrible being, whose connection with cannibalism will be discussed later, is the same as the Basque *Tartaro* (from "Tartar"), the French *Sarrasin*, the Eastern *Rakshasi* (from "rakus," raw-eater), the Zulu *Amazimu*, and the Red Indian *Weendijoes*.

From the spirits conceived by animistic man were evolved also the gods of the nations; and from some of these gods, once worshipped with divine honours, have descended, in more senses than one, certain of our familiar fairies (I use the term "fairies" in a wide sense). To Wodin (the Anglo-Saxon form of the Norse god, Odhin) and his host are referable the stories, common to England and Germany, of the Wild Hunt,<sup>4</sup> an example of which is the spectral hunter and his pack which haunt the Abbot's Way on Dartmoor. These spectral animals of Dartmoor are often called *Wish Hounds*; and *Wusc*, or *Wisc*, is one of the names of Woden.<sup>5</sup> To Woden we owe also many of the legends of the Sleeping Deliverers who await their country's call in barrows, caves, cellars, and subterranean halls (often in several places at once), and of whom Holger the Dane and our own Arthur are samples (see Chapter X). Such a folk-tale was adapted by

<sup>1</sup> M. R. Cox, *l.c.*, p. 152.

<sup>2</sup> J. A. Macculloch, *l.c.*, p. 301. Keane, however, says "the derivation lacks historical foundation."

<sup>3</sup> *l.c.*, p. 280.

<sup>4</sup> Hartland, *l.c.*, p. 233.

<sup>5</sup> Hunt, *l.c.*, p. 29.

Christianity into the famous legend of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus. Myths of this kind, which have been handed down through the ages, naturally vary under the influence of local colour. No less prominent among the fairies are certain pagan goddesses, of whom Dame Holle, identified by Grimm as a female deity, and the South German goddess, Berchta, who has become a witch of cannibal propensities and sometimes figures also as the leader of a Wild Hunt, may be cited.

There is another and very plausible theory of the possible origin of the beings in our fairy-tales that must be mentioned here. It is that of the lingering tradition of older races, dispossessed by newcomers and driven into wilder and less hospitable regions. It has been suggested that a race of larger men were dominant later arrivals, whose descendants left traditions of the former inhabitants as "little folk" who lived in barrows and underground dwellings among the hills and moors. These aboriginals may have, from time to time, carried off women or children, and thus have given rise to stories of ogres and dwarfs who kidnapped princesses, and tales of fairy changelings. The British story of Childe Roland may have originated in this way. Such a theory accounts for the presence of underground elves, trolls, and gnomes. Keane remarks<sup>1</sup> that it is possible "that the widely-spread legend as to the former existence of little men, dwarfs, and gnomes, who were supposed to haunt caves and retired places in the mountains, may be a reminiscence of these Neolithic pygmies." So also, conversely, may ideas of giants have arisen.

In Cornwall there are five varieties of the fairy people,<sup>2</sup> in which support for both theories—spirits of the dead and traditionary aboriginals—may be found. The Cornish fairies are:—

1. *The Small People*, spirits of those who inhabited

<sup>1</sup> *l.c.*, p. 123.

<sup>2</sup> Hunt, *l.c.*, p. 80.

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the county many thousand years ago, and who will eventually turn into *muryans*, or ants, and finally be lost from the face of the earth. They are spirits not good enough for heaven or bad enough for hell.

2. *The Spriggans*, found in cairns, cromlechs, barrows, or detached stones. Highly mischievous and thievish, they are responsible for natural commotions, possessed of giant strength, and have charge of buried treasure.

3. *The Piskies*, mischievous and unsociable, but a pleasant lot withal. They cannot harm mortals provided the latter turn their clothes inside out; so that to turn a coatsleeve or a stocking prevents a man or woman from being "piskie-led."

4. *The Buccas*, or *Knockers*, sprites of the mines, comparable to the Kobbolds or Trolls. They are believed to be the souls of the Jews who once worked the tin mines and cause the knockings heard in the mines. They cannot rest because of their wicked practices as tanners.<sup>1</sup>

5. *The Brownies*, kindly household sprites (? ancestral), who have mostly fled owing to the advent of the school-master. They are, however, still invoked to help when the bees swarm.

Another Celtic fairy is the Irish *Leprecaun*, whose name means literally "shoemaker." He can be heard tapping at the sole of the shoe he is making. He is rich, miserly, and knows the whereabouts of treasure—a knowledge which he can be made to divulge provided a tight grasp is kept on him and he is not allowed out of sight. A typical Leprecaun story, "The Boliauns," is told by Keightley.<sup>2</sup>

The fairies, as might be expected when their anthropomorphic and possibly aboriginal origins are considered, are remarkably human in their organization<sup>3</sup>—a peculiarity

<sup>1</sup> "The Knockers" were also known in the old days of lead-mining in Wales, as mentioned by M. L. Lewes in her "Stranger than Fiction" (1911), p. 216.

<sup>2</sup> T. Keightley, "The Fairy Mythology" (1850), p. 373.

<sup>3</sup> Hartland, *l.c.*, pp. 335-6.

which they share with gods. They marry and have children. In the latter event they not infrequently require the assistance of human midwives, as in the Welsh tale recorded by Rhys.<sup>1</sup> They steal children, leaving changelings, and women, for whom they substitute sometimes blocks of wood which may be animated by magic. Occasionally fairy women marry mortal men, as in many variants of the Swan-maiden cycle of stories. They are actuated strongly by the human passions of resentment and gratitude, revenging slights and rewarding services. Their chief distinction from human beings lies in their remarkable powers of magic. They are not necessarily immortal, as shown in the Cornish story of the Piskie's Funeral at Lelant.<sup>2</sup>

Similar attributes are assigned by Celtic and Teutonic superstition to gods, ancestors, witches, ghosts, and animals. All have their origin in the Animism of primitive man and his profound belief in the power of spirits, the possibilities of transformation, and the, to him, very real existence of witchcraft.

### § 3. *Fairy-land*

**I** From this brief consideration of the fairies we must pass to consider the regions in which they dwell—to fairy-land itself. This is often indistinguishable from the world of the dead. Hence spirits may be summoned by striking the ground. This is not surprising, since many of the fairies have been evolved from spirits of the departed. One of the parallels between the two abodes is the banishment of time from both places. The dead sleep on oblivious of the flight of ages, and the mortal who enters fairy-land knows nothing of the lapse of days, weeks, months, and years. This supernatural lapse of time in fairy-land has been exhaustively treated by Hartland,<sup>3</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> *l.c.*, chap. v, p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> Hunt, *l.c.*, p. 102.

<sup>3</sup> *l.c.*, chaps. vii, viii, and ix.

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is a well-known feature of fairy-tales in many lands. A typical example of this form of tale is given by this author<sup>1</sup> which tells of two Welsh youths who went out to fetch cattle and came upon a party of fairies dancing. "One was drawn into the circle; and the other was suspected of murdering him, until, at a wizard's suggestion, he went again to the same spot at the end of a year and a day. There he found his friend dancing, and managed to get him out, reduced to a mere skeleton. The first question put by the rescued man related to the cattle he was driving."

Again, living persons are sometimes stolen by the fairies and dead images left in their place, the connection of which with death is obvious. In many stories the hero who visits the fairy kingdom is warned against tasting the food offered to him there, lest he become subject to the fairy power, and so impotent to leave it; just as Persephone was condemned to stay in Hades because she ate of the pomegranate. This, as will be seen later, is an echo of the tabu placed upon the food offerings made to the dead. In spite, however, of the legitimate identification of fairy-land with the abode of the dead in many cases, the explanation does not always hold good. Universal superstition has postulated an underworld peopled by the dead, and this has resulted in the belief that death may be vanquished and the dead restored.<sup>2</sup> It must be remembered that the savage has great difficulty in understanding death, hence his many myths to account for it, and the numerous folk-tales based upon the idea of the renewal of life effected in those who are dead or who have been dismembered (see Chapter IV).

The entrance to fairy-land is to be found by penetrating into a sepulchral mound, by passing through a cave (since cave burial was practised), down a well, or through some deep cleft in a rock. Nor is the underworld always

<sup>1</sup> *l.c.*, p. 163.

<sup>2</sup> Macculloch, *l.c.*, p. 44, *note*.

a place of horror, despite the frequent gloominess of its approach. In many fairy-tales, of which Grimm's "Mother Holle" is an example, it is a realm of surpassing beauty, with glittering palaces, limpid rivers, translucent lakes, green meadows, and jewelled trees. The classic Hades contained Asphodel meads as well as the Gloom of Tartarus. It may be remarked here that the ancient Hebrew name for the underworld is *Sheol*, meaning literally "cave," probably reflecting a primitive Hebrew practice of cave burial. Passage into the underworld is often over a river, as the Styx in classical, the Jordan in Christian, the infernal Nile in Egyptian, the Vaitarani in Brahmin, and the Great Water in Red Indian mythology. Sometimes, however, it is by a bridge, as in the Mohammedan tradition of one "thinner than a hair, sharper than the edge of a sword, and bordered on both sides by thorns and prickly shrubs," or, as with the Hurons, one formed of a tree-trunk guarded by a dog. In New Guinea the bridge is a snake; in the Belgian folk-tale of The White Woolf it is of slippery ivory.

Since also the abode of death may be in some cases on the summit of a sacred mountain difficult of access, so the hero of the fairy-tales sometimes has to seek fairy-land by climbing a lofty peak; and, that his task may be made more difficult, the mountain is of glass, as in certain Slavonic and Scandinavian stories.

Lastly, the realm of spirits may, like the Christian heaven, be situated in the sky, the road thereto being the Milky Way, or by the rainbow, the bridge Bifröst of the Scandinavians.

From the idea of visits to the underworld have arisen myths in which adventurous heroes have made descents thereto in order to effect a rescue, as in the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, or to obtain some object of value—a cup or buried treasure. These later became folk-tales, and the underworld was transformed into either fairy-land, a land below the earth or a land below the sea. In

the early myths the lords of the underworld were gods ; in late folk-tales they developed into trolls, erl-kings, monsters, water-kings, or sea-maidens ; while the adventurous explorers were converted into heroes, as in the story of Prince Hatt Under the Earth.

#### § 4. *Fairy-Tales*

Fairy-tales, or folk-tales, are fiction in its childhood. They are in fact "the fossil remains of the thoughts and customs of the past," and it is in this that their value lies, since in our nursery tales lurk the serious beliefs of our forefathers. As Canon Macculloch has said,<sup>1</sup> they represent "the attempts of primitive men and savage races to clothe their impressions of the universe, their ideas and beliefs, their customs and manner of living, in a romantic garb, and in the form of a story.....they owe their birth in great part to that universal human desire to listen to a story." This desire is inherent in man all the world over, whether he be negro of Africa, redman of America, or peasant of Europe. The passion for story-telling is shown in the myriads of folk-tales which have been gleaned by indefatigable collectors from every part of the globe—a wealth which represents the unwritten literature of peasants. The stories did not originate with the peasantry who tell them ; they came rather from the remote past of savagery, for, as Thoms wrote in 1846 : "In our lower classes are still to be found sedimentary deposits of the traditions of remotely distant epochs." They became later coloured by succeeding influences, and to point this conclusion I cannot do better than again quote Macculloch<sup>2</sup>: "Tales which bristle with the marvellous, and introduce us to ogres and witches and enchanted heroes and heroines, to animals and things which talk and act like men, to the weirdest and most irrational customs and ideas, speak also of gunpowder and tobacco, of cannons and muskets, of cities, palaces,

<sup>1</sup> *l.c.*, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *l.c.*, p. 3.

hotels, coaches, and other things of later civilization ; or make the most evidently pagan ogres, monsters, and personages of mythical antiquity indulge in church-going and other Christian practices ; or refer to the Sultan or Boney in the most matter-of-fact way. But all this is only the veneer of a later age ; the material of the stories is old, so old as to be prehistoric."

Man clings tenaciously to tradition—we still search for Guy Fawkes previous to the opening of Parliament—and even when memory fails to recall the reason for the perpetuation of some tradition it may still be practised, so that tradition may become a habit. Therefore to discover the true significance of these stories it is necessary to survey the whole world and examine well the folklore of every people. By so doing we find that primitive customs of marriage, tabu, fetishism, and the like, are the real source of the majority of the strange incidents of popular folk-tale ; that the primitive storyteller worked with stock ideas ; that tales were invented independently where similar customs prevailed ; and that the germs of folk-tale were also those of religious myth, and, like all the mental workings of uncivilized man, they show the predominance of imagination over reason.

Many fairy-tales contain a large variety of different incidents, and, although investigation tends to segregate these into certain definite classes or cycles, separate incidents of different cycles are often to be found in new combinations. Careful research has, however, distinguished certain primitive types, and usually the primitive type gives a clue to the origin of a given story. In many cases the incident of a folk-tale is founded upon some mythical explanation of a natural phenomenon—a Myth of Observation—of which the Biblical story of Lot's wife is a religious example, and the Red Indian story of Iowi, which explains the Echo,<sup>1</sup> is one from folk-tale.

<sup>1</sup> Macculloch, *l.c.*, p. 287, *note*.



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The story of Jack and the Beanstalk, discussed in Chapter X, affords another illustration. In many folk-tales investigation distinguishes certain strata which tell their history as surely as geology demonstrates that of the earth. For a clear understanding of this fact I cannot do better than make a further quotation<sup>1</sup>: "Thus in many existing European folk-tales, as in those of India, China, or ancient Egypt, various strata may be observed. There is the most primitive stratum of all—the prehistoric, corresponding to the present-day savage in a large measure, and embodying those irrational ideas and forgotten customs.....which may be traced back to a time when they were by no means inconsistent with existing thought and life. Next we have the stratum resulting from barbaric civilization, and the story-tellers' exaggerated conception of it. It gives us such conceptions as those of jewelled caves, golden palaces, gardens with fruit trees unknown to the botanist, and all the accustomed wealth of barbaric pearl and gold. These are all clearly derived from the surroundings of the ignorant classes among whom the stories were told, and who were easily impressed by pomp and splendour, which at the same time they magnified and non-naturalized. In this period, too, just as in the earlier period the stories had been told of divinities or of chiefs and their children, or of the medicine-man or wise woman—the most impressive figures on the savage field of vision—so now they were told of kings and princes, queens and princesses, wizards and witches, who, *mutatis mutandis*, had themselves been the figures of the earlier tales. Next we have the later strata, consisting of ideas derived (1) from the new religious beliefs of the time, Buddhist, Mohammedan, Christian; and (2) from the ever-evolving conditions of later social life. All these are usually combined in any folk-tale, but with careful examination the various strata may be separated."

<sup>1</sup> Macculloch, *l.c.*, pp. 8-9.

§ 5. *The Diffusion of Fairy-Tales*

The love for stories is a universal passion; the story is everywhere; consequently story-telling is equally universal. It must have begun in that remote past when man had first acquired sufficient facility in language to converse freely with his fellows. From a very early time stories were invented to account for natural phenomena, to soothe children, to fire the developing imagination, or to wile away the night by the camp fire. From primitive beginnings the story has developed to its final expression in the romance, the novel, and the drama. Shakespeare and Thackeray, Milton and Dickens, are but the ultimate expressions of a long line of story-tellers which stretches back into the mists of antiquity.

Probably the earliest tales were narrated in a kind of sing-song, a sort of rough poetry, and there is reason to believe that the folk-song is older than the folk-tale, since the former would be more easily committed to memory and would furnish the rhythm which is so dear to primitive peoples. Many folk-tales are preserved in the mixture of prose and verse known as the *Cante-fable*, which is considered by Jacobs<sup>1</sup> as the primitive germ from which developed both ballad and folk-tale.

The diffusion of folk-tales probably first occurred from race to race by means of migration, by prisoners and slaves taken in war, by marriages, and by trade. The later formation of the great trade routes must have been a medium of considerable importance. Miss Cox<sup>2</sup> suggests that the gypsies, those mysterious wanderers over the face of the earth, have also played no small part. According to Macculloch,<sup>3</sup> the more the science of folk-tale is studied the more we are "driven to the conclusion that *there never has been any one centre for story invention, but that there were many centres, and that*

<sup>1</sup> J. J. Jacobs, "English Fairy-Tales" (1898), p. 247.

<sup>2</sup> *l.c.*, p. 294.

<sup>3</sup> *l.c.*, p. 454.

diffusion by borrowing or transmission has gone on steadily from prehistoric times. This does not, however, exclude the possibility that stories with similar incidents, even similar sequence of incidents, may not have been invented independently in different quarters." That such independent invention may have occurred is supported by the consideration that similar environment is likely to produce similar trends of thought. Moreover, reasoning by analogy, it is certain that primitive peoples living remote from one another have developed the same forms of pottery and flint implements and similar methods of producing fire.

It is superfluous to pursue further this part of our subject. With the antiquity of the folk-tale established, we must proceed to comparatively recent periods, in which a great wealth of stories has come down from the past. It is necessary to give a brief account of how they have been perpetuated during later historic times.

In savage countries folk-tales, besides being told round the family fire, are handed down by orators, chiefs, and priests; in some cases by professional story-tellers. Among the Arabs especially, the professional story-teller is a prominent person, who plies his art in the Bazaars. Professional story-tellers and bards are also met with in India, Greece, Albania, Bosnia, Herzegovina, and other countries. In Cornwall, to come close home, the wandering "droll-teller," as he was called, has become extinct less than a hundred years.<sup>1</sup> These wanderers influenced legend by introducing the names of people remembered by the villagers. "The legends of Tregagle are illustrations of this. The man who has gained the notoriety of being attached to a tale as old as that of Orestes was a magistrate in Cornwall two hundred years since."<sup>2</sup>

In ancient days the wandering bards, or skalds, were a recognized body, and every chief and petty king kept his

<sup>1</sup> Hunt, *l.c.*, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 28.

own special minstrel, who, at the end of the day and at every feast, recited his tales in praise of popular heroes and the deeds of his own patron. In Wales the bards formed an honoured institution, possessing a special organization, or college, under the direction of a professional chief. In the Middle Ages the troubadours, minstrels, and jongleurs equally carried on the part of the earlier bards. Coming nearer to our own times, many tales were, as in earlier periods, perpetuated round the family hearth when the day's work was done, and the chance guest who sojourned at mansion, farm, or cottage was ever sure of a cordial welcome if he was a good storyteller. The pedlars and pipers who travelled from hamlet to hamlet and attended fairs, festivals, and marriages, also played their part. Another highly important factor were the old people who, their active life-work done, recited the traditions and folk-tales of their youth beside the evening fire. These are given great prominence by Campbell in Scotland<sup>1</sup> and by Luzel in Brittany,<sup>2</sup> both of whom describe how the guest also told tales in return for the freely-given hospitality. The same particulars apply equally to Normandy, Gascony, Italy, Wales, and at one time to England. Women have always taken a large share in the handing down of folk-tales, and many of the fairy-stories collected by the Brothers Grimm and others were obtained from mothers, nurses, and old crones. The art of writing enormously influenced the fixing of tradition and the furnishing of clues to the existence of special forms of tales at given periods; but practically all the tales which have come down to us must have been transmitted orally over great periods of time—a fact which will be less surprising to many when it is realized that the Vedic poems, the ancient sacred literature of India, were thus handed down unchanged for thousands of years.

One salient fact to be mentioned is the intense

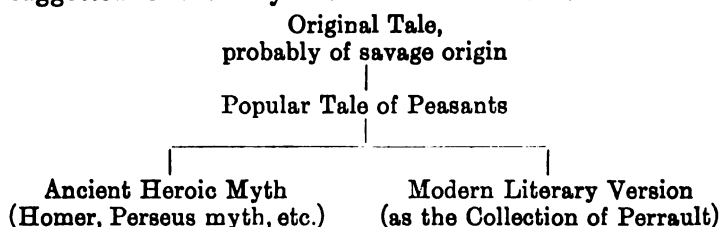
<sup>1</sup> J. F. Campbell, "Popular Tales of the West Highlands," edn. 1860-62.

<sup>2</sup> F. M. Luzel, "Veillées Bretonnes" (1879).

*conservatism*—that clinging by man to tradition, already noted—with which the folk-tale is told by primitive men and by peasants. This conservatism in telling, which among professional story-tellers amounted to an adherence not merely to the very words, but to gestures, actions, and facial expressions as well, had its value in controlling accuracy. Those who have indulged much in the delightful pleasure of telling fairy-tales to young children—those primitive men in miniature—know how they dislike any variation in their favourite stories. As Hartland remarks<sup>1</sup>: “The faithful delivery of the tradition is the principle underlying all variation of manner; and it is not confined to any one race or people. It is not denied that changes do take place as the story passes from one to another. This, indeed, is the inevitable result of the play of the two counteracting forces.....the conservative tendency and the tendency to variation. It is the condition of development; it is what makes a science of folk-tales both necessary and possible. Nor can it be denied that some changes are voluntary. But the voluntary changes are rare, and the involuntary changes are only such as are natural and unavoidable if the story is to continue its existence in the midst of the ever-shifting social organism of humanity.”

### § 6. *The Classification of Fairy-Tales*

In his Introduction to Miss Cox's collection of stories belonging to the Cinderella cycle,<sup>2</sup> the late Andrew Lang suggested for the fairy-tale some such descent as this:—



<sup>1</sup> *L.c.*, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> M. R. Cox, “Cinderella” (1893).

At first sight such a pedigree suggests a classification, since it comprises nearly all the types of incident which folk-tales contain. But it includes two groups of story only—the *Märchen*, or Nursery Tales, and the *Sagas*, or Epics, which are very closely related. Folk-tales have been classified into certain prominent types according to their incidents; and no less than seventy such types common to the European area have been given in a "Handbook" published by the Folklore Society. As, however, some stories contain incidents common to several types, there is necessarily a certain amount of overlapping. Although excellent in a work written for experts, such a classification is apt to confuse others. There is another and simpler form of classification which it is more convenient to adopt for the purposes of this book; and special types of incident can be dealt with as they arise. Under this scheme all folk-tales fall into five classes: Nursery Tales, Epics, Drolls, Cumulative Stories, and Beast Tales. Each of these must be considered briefly.

*Nursery Tales*, or *Märchen*, deal with imaginary heroes and heroines, like Cinderella, Aladdin, Jack the Giant-killer, and Bluebeard. When the same stories profess to deal with real occurrences and the deeds of supposed ancestral heroes, they shift into the next class, the *Sagas*. These legends may go a step further, and concern themselves with the doings of gods, when they pass out of the sphere of fairy-tale and enter into that of mythology.

*Sagas*, Heroic Epics, or Legends, have been divided further by Hartland<sup>1</sup> into (1) Historical and Local; (2) Giants; (3) Fairies; (4) The Devil and other Goblins; (5) Witchcraft; (6) Ghosts; (7) Drolls. The last-named are, however, usually placed in a separate class. The following examples of these sub-classes are all, save one, taken from our own country. (1) The Devonshire story

<sup>1</sup> E. S. Hartland, "English Fairy- and Other Folk-Tales" (1890).

of Drake's Drum, and of how, sitting lost in thought concerning England's enemies on the Devil's Point at Plymouth, that hero whittled at a stick, and the chips became ships as they fell into the Sound. (2) The story of Ordulph of Tavistock, recalling the Biblical account of Samson and the Gates of Gaza (see Chapter X), and that of the building of St. Michael's Mount by giants. (3) The Cornish tales of the Lost Child of Treonike,<sup>1</sup> and of the Piskie's Funeral. (4) The legends of Brent Tor Church on Dartmoor, and the Devil's Bridge at Mynach. (5) The tale of Hansel and Grethel. (6) The legends of the Weaver of Dean Combe, Devon, of the Spectre Coach of Lanreath, Dartmoor, and the tasks laid upon the Cornish Tregaeagle.

The connection between Sagas and Märchen is very close, as is indicated by Lang's pedigree; and many of the Nursery Tales belonging to foreign races assume the form of Sagas in England. With regard to Sagas, it may be noted that Keane<sup>2</sup> considers that the Norse mythology may be regarded in great measure as an echo of historic events.

*Drolls.* These are purely comic stories, and their nature is usually indicated by their titles. The best known are: The Wise Fools of Gotham, The Three Wishes, The Man Who Set Out to Find Three Greater Fools than His Wife, The Miller at the Professor's Examination, Stupid's Mistaken Cries, The Three Sillies, Mr. Vinegar, Lazy Jack, and The History of Tom Thumb.

*Cumulative Stories,* in which, as in *The House that Jack Built*, the effect is obtained by the repetition of all preceding steps when a new one has been added. These will be discussed in Chapter XI.

*Beast Stories.* There is an enormous number of fairy-tales in which talking animals and grateful beasts play an

<sup>1</sup> Hunt, *l.c.*, p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> *l.c.*, p. 321.

important part. They reflect, as will be seen later, the animistic stage of primitive life, when man considered himself as one with the other animals; an idea of union in harmony with primitive thought. These are not, however, the tales classified under this heading, although they are probably akin to them. The class comprises rather those beast stories of which the famous Uncle Remus series is an excellent example, and which have their variants all over the world.

There is one Beast Story, extremely popular with English children, which from its somewhat unique character must be specially mentioned here. This is The Story of the Three Bears. Jacobs<sup>1</sup> states that it is the only example coming within his knowledge in which a tale that can be definitely traced to a specific author has become a folk-tale. It appeared originally in Southey's "The Doctor, etc."<sup>2</sup> The source from which the poet obtained it was "Scrapefoot," which is probably a survival of the English form of Beast Epic (the Reynard the Fox cycle), the tales in which related to the feud between the fox and the bear (or wolf). In the original Scrapefoot was a fox, or vixen; and Southey converted the animal into a little old woman. From the dame the folk developed the little girl Silverhair (sometimes Goldielocks), whose adventure with The Three Bears still delights so many of us in our early days.

### § 7. *English Fairy-Tales*

In conclusion, a few words must be said concerning English fairy-tales. These, according to Jacobs, once existed in some numbers; but about the middle of the eighteenth century Perrault introduced French stories, whereby Cinderella and Puss-in-Boots usurped in popularity the places formerly occupied by Catskin, Childe Roland, and Mr. Fox. The publication of the collection

<sup>1</sup> *l.c.*, p. 93.

<sup>2</sup> Quarto edition, p. 327.



of the Brothers Grimm in 1812 completed the usurpation, when Rumpelstiltskin ousted Tom Tit Tot, and The Sillies resigned in favour of Hansel and Grethel. From that time English fairy-tales became a confused medley of Perrault and Grimm.

But there have been other causes which contributed to the decay of the British fairy-tale. In his Introduction to "English Fairy-Tales" Hartland says: "A considerable number of English and Welsh folk-tales have been collected and written down. But whereas Nursery-Tales, or *Märchen*, form a large proportion of the stories found in other countries, those recorded in England are very few, while it is a remarkable fact that not a single *Märchen* has been discovered in Wales. By far the greatest number of English and Welsh stories are Sagas." He asks: "Why, then, have these *Märchen* disappeared?", and replies by the conjecture that adults were ashamed of telling them—an answer that can hardly be taken as adequate, since many would surely have been preserved by transmission from mothers to their children, and mothers are not usually ashamed to tell nursery-tales to their little ones.

Since there are few *Märchen* recorded in the Scottish Lowlands, fewer in England, and none in Wales, while they exist in ample numbers in every other European country, there must be a good reason for the discrepancy. Hartland considers that to account for it by the spread of education is insufficient, although Campbell<sup>1</sup> emphasizes this cause for Scotland. It is true, however, that schools have been good and abundant in Scotland since the days of John Knox, and that until recent times they were restricted in England, and very few and poor in Wales. Probably Hartland is correct in ascribing the most potent influence to that Evangelical Protestantism which has been more consistently and uncompromisingly severe in

<sup>1</sup> *l.c.*, vol. i.

the suppression of gaiety in Britain than anywhere else in Europe. Its gloomy fanaticism "substituted for the idle tales of tradition the more edifying veracious histories of Noah, Jacob, and Samson," totally ignorant of the fact that these stories are themselves nothing but the folk-tales of an earlier race and possess variants among many other peoples. Moreover, it may be questioned whether the story of Jacob's over-reaching Esau is particularly edifying to the child mind, or whether the three "histories" cited are conspicuously veracious. The growing Puritanism which came with the Reformation has been influential in England and Scotland ever since, although of late years it has become generally less rampant. Hartland also gives weight to the effect of Howel Harries's Methodism in Wales, which, while smashing many of the pleasures in life (and the listening to stories is itself an intense pleasure), suppressed only *open* immorality and ruffianism. It inevitably crushed out the old popular traditions, allowing those only which dealt with ghosts, devils, and the like, for which Wesley himself seems to have entertained a profound credulity. In regard to this it is worth while to quote Baring-Gould's remarks.<sup>1</sup> "From my experience of English Dissenters," he says, "I am satisfied that their religion is, to a greater extent than any one has supposed, a revival of ancient paganism which has long lain dormant among the English peasantry." Hartland points out that, as nursery-tales are mostly treasured and transmitted by women, they would suffer more by this dour Methodism, because it is the women who are most affected by religion. Hartland's arguments are strong, and probably give the correct solution. One can well imagine that the cunning, relentless espionage of fanatical Methodism would finally prevail, even though the most cherished tales were not given up without a struggle

<sup>1</sup> S. Baring-Gould, "Curious Myths of the Middle Ages" (1872), p. 424.

—a struggle more poignant because necessarily secret. Yet so great is human conservatism that the Scottish mother still places an open Bible by her child to keep the fairies away, just as the Chinese frightens off evil spirits by keeping his classics under his pillow.

There are persons whose views upon education are so remarkably advanced that they advocate this discouragement of fairy-tales with a view to the encouragement of science. It is doubtful whether their endeavours—no doubt well meant—are likely to be very successful. Excessively “advanced” views are sometimes due to ignorance, and had these persons a knowledge of folklore and child psychology they might perceive that there is a place for both science and fairy-tale. The child is father to the man. He is, as I have said, an epitome of the evolution of his racial history, and as such possesses many primitive characteristics. Man has always shown a passion for stories: his savage forefathers displayed it in their eagerness for those which have come down to us as folk-tales; his medieval descendant showed it in his fondness for heroic legends and romances; while his modern counterpart exhibits it by the avidity with which he reads novels of the class—good, bad, or indifferent—which appeals most to his intellectual grade. The child has the same desire. “Tell me a story” is one of his most frequent requests; and the story best fitted for him and which he likes best is the fairy-tale. It satisfies his inherited longing; it develops—provided it be employed judiciously—his judgment of and taste for literature, and it forms a suitable prelude to his later introduction to the best literary productions. As a child, he loves best the story that appealed to primitive man, whose reflection he is. His literary development can be watched, along with his physical growth, as it passes from Nursery-tale and Saga, through the works of Henty and Jules Verne, to those of Thackeray, Dickens, and Hardy.

The value of the fairy-tale as developing the dawning literary taste is one thing, the value of science as training the observation and correct reasoning is another; they are separate, not antagonistic, and the youth who later learns the science of fairy-tale will gather much truth concerning the development of his race.

## CHAPTER II

### PRIMITIVE CUSTOMS OCCURRING IN FAIRY-TALE

" And the wildest dreams of Kew are the facts of Khatmandhu,  
And the crimes of Clapham chaste in Martaban."

—RUDYARD KIPLING.

#### § 1. *Royalty in Fairy-land*

I HAVE pointed out how numerous primitive customs and beliefs are reflected in folk-tale, and that it is only by a study of these that the incongruity and absurdity of some of its incidents can be recognized as more apparent than real. It is necessary, therefore, to see in what these customs and beliefs consist. It will be more convenient to take these together, although it may occasionally be necessary to revert later to some of them, or to give additional information concerning them when dealing with special story cycles popular with British children.

In this Chapter I shall consider primitive *customs* relating to the kingly state, to marriage, and to the practice of cannibalism; while in the two Chapters immediately following I shall deal with primitive *beliefs* round animals, transformations, monsters, sleep, fetishism, the renewal of life, magic and sorcery, and tabu.

The incongruities met with in fairy-tale descriptions of kings are remarkable, and can be explained only by reference to primitive customs. Usually the kingly state is marked by a curious simplicity; its occupant is something akin to Beranger's "Roi d'Yvetot," so successfully imitated by Thackeray in "The King of Brentford." The monarch may live in all the pomp and splendour of barbaric royalty, and may yet have to earn his living and

carry out even such personal acts as cleaning his own weapons or saddling his own steed, while his queen and their daughters perform such menial duties as the preparation of meals or the washing of the royal clothes. Indeed, kings in fairy-land remind us somewhat of the two kings of Barataria in "The Gondoliers," who not only polished the regalia but "ran on little errands for the Minister of State." The splendid part of them, the jewels and gold, the gorgeous appurtenances of their royalty, are in reality the additions which have been engrafted by a later stratum of barbaric civilization on to the primitive formation of the story. Further, kings and princes in fairy-land are phenomenally plentiful; like the dukes in Don Alhambra's song, they are "two a penny." Their kingdoms and principalities are small and close together, and their friends are often of low birth and in humble circumstances. Their subjects the common people, wandering adventurers and penniless strangers usually find it quite easy to gain access to the royal presence, and their conversation is often simple and colloquial. The royal daughters, moreover, are frequently given in marriage to suitors of lowly birth, to whom, instead of to their princely brothers, the kingdom passes. This last feature reflects a social condition, known as the matriarchate, which will be dealt with later.

The explanation of this peculiar state of things lies in the fact that the primitive forms of these stories refer to a prehistoric period when the kingdoms depicted were mere local federations of small tribes, or tribal divisions, each under a petty chief. As Macculloch says<sup>1</sup>: "*Obviously these are traces of a simply organized social system, and the stories have been told first, not of kings, but of the head-man of the village community and his family, of the petty chiefs of small tribal groups, not far removed from their own 'subjects.'* Later ages made

<sup>1</sup> *L.c.*, p. 17.

them more and more regal monarchs in the stories—reflections of the kings of the period, but the traces of their simple origin still clung to them.” Those who have read Keane’s “Man: Past and Present” will realize what “kingship” among very primitive peoples implies.

### § 2. *Customs Concerned with Marriage*

When we consider that love and marriage make one of the two great incentives of human action, it is not surprising to find that they play a large part in folk-tale and myth, and that the loves of fairy princes and princesses are as prominent in the former as are the amours of gods and goddesses in the latter.

A favourite incident in fairy-tale is that in which a king’s daughter is given in marriage to the suitor who is successful in performing some task which calls for the exercise of his ingenuity or strength to the utmost. This is seen in the stories of the Dragon Sacrifice cycle, of which the classic myth of Perseus and Andromeda is a well-known example, and in the Fortunate Youngest Son tales. Sometimes the task takes the form of a riddle, as in the English nursery tale of the Princess of Canterbury, told by Hartland<sup>1</sup> from a Chap-book of 1823. These episodes reflect a primitive marriage custom which actually survives among certain modern savage tribes, and which Macculloch illustrates by reference to the Dyaks of Borneo, amid whom the suitor is obliged to take so many heads before he can obtain his bride. With the Zulus a warrior could not marry until he had the right to wear a head-ring, which could be won only by prowess in battle. In many tales of European origin it is the woman herself who imposes the task, recalling Oatta’s song:—

Then a pile of heads he laid—  
Thirty thousand heaped on high—

<sup>1</sup> “English Folk- and Fairy-Tales,” p. 18.

All to please the Kafir maid,  
Where the Oxus ripples by.  
Grimly spake Atulla Khan:—  
"Love hath made this thing a man."

It has often occurred to me, in reference to these tasks, that there is a close connection, in the sexual relations of primitive man, between the "display" of the males of some of the lower animals and the efforts of the youth to please a desired girl. The performance of some imposed task, both among actual savages and in folk-tale, may be a part of this, just as the "swagger" shown in the tendency to undue indulgence in fancy ties and waistcoats, on the part of the young man when he seeks the company of the opposite sex, is a probable survival.

Another common feature of fairy-tale marriages is that, when the king's daughter weds, her father's dominions pass to her husband. This is a frequent incident in savage folk-tale, and is another reflection of primitive life. As is well known to anthropologists, among primitive peoples the husband goes to live with his bride's family, and descent is reckoned through the mother. This social custom, where the power and importance belonged to the woman, is known as the *Matriarchate*, in contradistinction to the opposite and later condition, or *Patriarchate*. It affords a reason for the frequency with which, in fairy-tale, the wife is the more clever and cunning partner, the veritable "better half," especially the more skilled in sorcery. It refers to the existence of the "mother age" in folk-tales.<sup>1</sup> As regards the wife's superiority in magic over her usually stupid husband, this has a further significance of its own. "The bad character," says Macculloch,<sup>2</sup> "with which she is invested is the result of Christian influence as well as of the social changes which, making man the centre of the social group, sought to break down the power and knowledge of woman. The

<sup>1</sup> Karl Pearson, "The Chances of Death" (1897), vol. ii.

<sup>2</sup> *l.c.*, p. 19.



priestess of the earlier civilization, in whom all love and religion was embodied, became the accursed witch of the later time. But frequently, too, the witch appears in her primitive form as the wise woman, or is even described as a queen—reminiscence of her important functions in the mother age.”

Among the tasks imposed upon the aspirant for the princess's hand is his ability to recognize his bride from among other girls. Usually he succeeds either by some previous warning of a slight sign to be made by the bride herself, or by the assistance of some friendly or grateful animal (usually an insect) which he has befriended. Thus, in a Danish tale, the bride pinches him, while in the Polish story of Prince Unexpected, belonging to the Swan-maiden cycle, the youngest daughter is recognized by her suitor from a “lady cow” over her right eye.<sup>1</sup> In some stories the bride is recognized by a deformity resulting from previous accident or mutilation, as the loss of a finger or toe. This folk-tale incident points to another primitive marriage ceremony—a custom still surviving in some European countries. Thus, in Transylvania the bride hides with two other girls behind a curtain, and they endeavour to confuse the bridegroom, who has to discover which is the bride; while the Lorraine peasant bride and three other girls dress alike for the same purpose. The same custom, according to Sir G. L. Gomme,<sup>2</sup> is reflected in a form of the children's game of “Kiss-in-the-Ring,” in which the girl's face is covered with a shawl and the boy has to guess her identity. Similar customs of dressing alike or of surrounding the bride with other women occur among the Abyssinians, Zulus, Celebes, Malays, and other peoples. “These, as well as the folk-tale incident of the recognition of the bride, point back to a primitive practice

<sup>1</sup> Wratishlow, “Folklore Journal” (1884), vol. ii, p. 9. “Lady Cow” = “lady bird.”

<sup>2</sup> Sir G. L. Gomme, “Folklore Relics” (1883), p. 232.

of hiding her among others of her sex, so as to make it difficult for the man to obtain her ; not as a task, however, but in reality as a ceremony to lessen the unknown dangers which to the primitive mind were supposed to lurk in marriage. The modern custom of providing the bride with a troop of bridesmaids is a relic of this primitive ceremony."<sup>1</sup> Possibly the hiding of the bride in the old ballad of "The Mistletoe Bough," which had so tragic a termination, may be an echo of the same custom.

The mention of bridesmaids leads us to another marriage custom. According to Darwin,<sup>2</sup> our "best man" seems originally to have been the chief abettor of the bridegroom in the act of marriage by capture. This is another primitive marriage ceremony, traceable in those fairy-tales in which the heroine is carried off by some ogre, dwarf, or monster, and rescued later by the hero. It has been suggested that, when one tribe raided another for the purpose of carrying off the women, the marauders would very naturally be regarded with detestation, possibly also with fear, and they would be converted, by exaggerated description, into uncouth and abhorrent creatures. They would thus gradually become converted into ogres, dwarfs, or other unpleasant beings ; and this would especially be the case when men of a lower race carried off the women of a higher race. In some stories the ravisher is the Fairy- or Elf-king himself, as in the English fairy-tale of "Childe Roland,"<sup>3</sup> which belongs to the Youngest Son cycle and probably gives an idealized picture of marriage by capture of one of the diminutive non-Aryan dwellers of the green hills with an Aryan maiden, and her recapture by her brother.<sup>4</sup> Marriage by capture is also reflected in the numerous stories belonging to the Swan Maiden cycle (see Chapter IX).

<sup>1</sup> Macculloch, *l.c.*, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> "The Descent of Man," 2nd edn. (1887), p. 592.

<sup>3</sup> Jacobs, *l.c.*, p. 117.

<sup>4</sup> The description of the Dark Tower corresponds to the Maes How of Orkney.

A frequent incident also is the substitution of another woman for the bride—an imposture which reminds us of the giving of Leah to Jacob in place of Rachel. This example, however, is connected rather with the universal objection to the marriage of a younger before her elder sister—a custom still existing in some parts of England.<sup>1</sup> Of this substitution incident there are four types.<sup>2</sup> The first is that in which the serving-maid who accompanies the bride gets rid of the latter and marries the intended husband herself. Later the true bride appears, having been preserved (usually by a supernatural agent), reveals herself, and the traitor servant is cut to pieces. This occurs in an Albanian story<sup>3</sup> and in some variants of the Cinderella cycle. Elphinstone Dayrell<sup>4</sup> gives a Nigerian variant, "The Slave Girl who Tried to Kill her Mistress," which closely resembles the Albanian tale. In the second type the bride's portrait is seen by the king, but her place is usurped by her step-sister. The disappointed king punishes the true bride's brother, but the true bride comes to the king's house to reproach the impostor, and is caught by the king, who kills the step-sister and her mother. This is the story of "Bushy Bride."<sup>5</sup> The substitution of the step-mother in the third type takes place only when the true bride's child is born. She is turned into an animal or bird by enchantment, but seeks her child, and the imposture is discovered. Examples of this type are cited by Macculloch from Russia<sup>6</sup> and Esthonia.<sup>7</sup> The fourth type is one in which the true

<sup>1</sup> J. S. Udal, "Dorsetshire Folklore" (1922), p. 191. The author refers to Napier's "Folklore of the West of Scotland," p. 52, for a parallel objection in the North. In Dorset, when younger persons married before their elder sisters or brothers, the latter had to dance barefooted over furze bushes placed on the floor; but in some parts of the county it is sufficient for them to dance in stocking feet merely.

<sup>2</sup> Macculloch, *l.c.*, p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> A. Dozon, "Contes Albanais" (1881), p. 57.

<sup>4</sup> "Folk-Stories from Southern Nigeria" (1910), p. 126.

<sup>5</sup> G. W. Dasent, "Popular Tales from the Norse" (1859), p. 405.

<sup>6</sup> W. R. S. Ralston, "Russian Folk-Tales" (1873), p. 185.

<sup>7</sup> W. F. Kirby, "The Hero of Esthonia" (1895), vol. ii, p. 45.

bride is first blinded and mutilated by her sisters, and when the one who takes her place becomes *enceinte* she longs for certain foods. The true bride, informed of this by a friendly animal, sends the coveted articles to her by a friend, who bargains for the missing eyes and members. The typical example is an Italian tale,<sup>1</sup> but it has Russian, French, Greek, and other variants. All the types are represented not only in Europe and Asia, but also among primitive peoples; and this substitution incident represents another marriage custom occurring sometimes in Abyssinia, Brittany, Poland, Esthonia, and Sweden. A false bride is substituted several times running before the wedded couple can go away. Although now practically only a game, it was originally intended to ward off the dangers of marriage. To quote Macculloch once more<sup>2</sup>: "It is but part of a larger group of customs in which.....the bridegroom must not see his wife or she her husband on the wedding night, or for some time after, or until the first child is born. Customs such as these would easily suggest the possibility of another woman, in love with the bridegroom, or for ulterior ends, getting rid of the true bride and taking her place. Indeed, I see no reason to doubt that such an incident may have taken place. Other incidents would then be worked into the story, which would receive an imaginative setting, and various types would easily be evolved."

A not uncommon incident is one in which it is expressly stipulated that the husband shall not inquire of the wife her name, or *vice versa*, the penalty for violation of this prohibition being the disappearance of the one asked. This incident, however, has nothing to do with any marriage ceremony, but is concerned rather with the tabu upon names. This subject, which is a large one, will be discussed in Chapter IV.

<sup>1</sup> D. Comparetti, "Novelline Popolari Italiane" (1875), No. 25.

<sup>2</sup> *l.c.*, p. 26.

§ 3. *Cannibalism*

Stories of cannibalism or anthropophagy have always possessed a fascination, and they occupy a prominent place in fairy-tale. Even the gentle Desdemona was thrilled by Othello's descriptions of

Cannibals that each other eat,  
The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads  
Do grow beneath their shoulders.

Possibly the unconscious hold that ancestral primitive customs keep upon us has something to do with it; for, horrible as it may seem, there is no doubt that it was practised by our remote ancestors, and that this far-away period is reflected in our folk-tales. As I pointed out in "The Story of the Bible,"<sup>1</sup> it probably gave rise to the custom of human sacrifice, the ceremonial eating of the victim being the root of sacramental meals; and that the story of Abraham's attempted offering of Isaac was a myth framed to explain the change from human to animal sacrifice among the Hebrews. Similar myths, usually of culture-heroes, occur with other peoples. The Ainos of Japan, for example, were converted from anthropophagy by the divinity Aioina, and the Egyptians by the god Osiris. Religious myths and folk-tales are first cousins (if not more closely related); and, given a universal primitive custom, traces are certain to be found in both. Hence, distasteful as such a subject must be, it is necessary that it should be examined here if we are to arrive at a clear understanding of how the many ogre and other cannibal stories which are to be found all over the world have arisen.

The causes of cannibalism may be enumerated as follows:—

1. *Famine*, by which men were driven by necessity to the extremity of making a meal of their weaker fellows. This is usually considered to be the most probable cause,

<sup>1</sup> P. 109.

particularly when we reflect that self-preservation is one of the most powerful incentives in life, not merely of human life, but of all forms of existence, from the lowest plant to man. It is second only, if not equal, to the instinct for the preservation of the race. As Malthus<sup>1</sup> has remarked: "It seems to be a worse compliment to human nature and to the savage state to attribute this horrid repast to malignant passions without the goad of necessity, rather than to the great law of self-preservation, which has at times overcome every other feeling, even among the most humane and civilized people." Such cases are not without modern examples among civilized men when in dire straits for food; and I remember having pointed out to me at a well-known seaside village a sailor who had preserved himself when adrift in an open boat by this fearful *dernier ressort*. This being so, it is not surprising to find old tales reflecting it, and Macculloch<sup>2</sup> cites several of them, among which are that of the Greek islet of Phlebas, haunted by the ghosts of seamen who had there lived upon each other till only their captain remained, and the tradition of Lord Soulis and Melville of Glenbervie described in Scott's "Minstrelsy" (p. 462). Among a people with whom famine had resulted in cannibalism the practice might become established by a horrid preference for human flesh. As an example of this, the Maoris of New Zealand may be mentioned.

2. *Transference of Qualities*. With many savages the custom has arisen from the idea that any special virtue the victim possessed, as bravery in battle or wisdom in counsel, would pass into the person who devoured him—an idea possibly confirmed by self-suggestion. From this conception of the transference of qualities arose also the practice of cannibalism as a

3. *Ritual*, in which the body of the victim (sometimes identified as himself divine) is eaten with the idea that it

<sup>1</sup> T. B. Malthus, "An Essay on Population," Everyman edn., vol. i, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> *I.c.*, p. 298.

conveyed divine properties or possessed *curative* powers. The victim being considered as divine, religious anthropophagy became theophagy ("god-eating"), a ritual which formed a very large part of the ancient Mexican religion. Theophagy was essentially a part of vegetation-god ritual, and is discussed in "The Story of the Bible" (p. 145). In later times, when animal was substituted for human sacrifice, to be replaced still later by cakes shaped in human or animal form, the same religious and medicinal virtues were attributed to them, and in some countries such properties are still ascribed to the sacred host. The use of parts of the human body (scrapings from skulls, for example) in the pharmacology of a past age reflects this curative cannibalism; and in modern China human blood and other portions of the body are esteemed efficacious as drugs.

4. *Legal*. Cannibalism has, in some instances, remained with a legal significance, as when criminals or dead enemies are devoured in revenge, or to inflict indignity upon them. In the Malay Peninsula<sup>1</sup> the punishment of those who murder with the blowpipe was compulsion to eat a portion of the victim's flesh. The human sacrifices offered as a sin atonement were eaten by the priests. The custom of eating prisoners of war may also have arisen, as Malthus<sup>2</sup> suggests, from the object of primitive tribes in battle being "not conquest, but destruction."

Lastly, there are two forms of cannibalism practised for other reasons—namely, *filial respect* and *expediency*. In the former a dead parent is consumed out of reverence, some idea of inheriting his virtues by assimilation probably acting as an additional incentive. Some tribes hand round a paste of "potted ancestor" after the evening meal, a small portion of which is taken with reverence rather than relish. In the second form the eating is

<sup>1</sup> W. W. Skeat and C. O. Blagden, "Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsula" (1906), vol. i, p. 50, *note*. <sup>2</sup> *l.c.*

done to keep down the population. Robertson<sup>1</sup> has stated that "it has been argued that cannibalism once saved the world," but whether he refers to this form of the practice I do not know. It is a variety of man-eating known as "endophagy," or the consumption of individuals of one's own tribe, in distinction to "exophagy," or eating those belonging to another tribe, which is the more common form.

Klaatsch<sup>2</sup> has advanced the plausible hypothesis that cannibalism may have arisen in an anxiety to take care of the body in case the soul might wish to return to it. "The best means of doing this, to the mind of the earliest human savages, was that the survivors should eat the body of the dead man. If the soul then wants to return, it must enter the survivors. The advantage of this is that they will acquire the powers of the dead. Here we have the primitive nature and the cause of cannibalism."

Having thus reviewed the origin of cannibalism, we can now discuss the forms in which it appears in fairy-tale. Here it occurs in two main types: 1, that in which an ogre, witch, or demon *belonging to another race*, devours men; and 2, that in which it is depicted as a perverted taste in individuals of a people no longer addicted to the practice. These types must be described briefly, and it will be noted that they correspond roughly to the exophagous and endophagous varieties just mentioned.

1. The classical example of the exophagous type is the myth of Odysseus and Polyphemus, in which an ancient Greek *Märchen* has been converted into an epic. Shortly, Polyphemus, a son of Poseidon (Neptune), was one of the Cyclopes, in Sicily. He is represented as a gigantic monster, having one eye placed in the middle of his forehead, who cared nothing for the gods and was a devourer of human flesh. He dwelt in a cave near

<sup>1</sup> J. M. Robertson, "Pagan Christs" (1911), p. 385.

<sup>2</sup> H. Klaatsch, "The Evolution and Progress of Mankind" (1923), p. 213.



Mount Etna, and pastured his flocks upon the mountain. It will be recalled that other Cyclopes are described as working for Hephæstus (Vulcan) in the crater of that volcano, the smoke and flame of which were regarded as coming from the god's forge. Polyphemus became enamoured of the nymph Galatea; but she, very naturally, rejected him for Acis, wherefore Polyphemus revenged himself upon the favoured lover by crushing him beneath a huge rock. When Odysseus (Ulysses) was driven upon Sicily he, with twelve companions, entered the cave of Polyphemus. The monster devoured half-a-dozen of the companions and kept Odysseus and the remaining six as prisoners. The hero, however, contrived to make Polyphemus drunk, and, with a burning pole, put out his one eye; after which he and his friends escaped by concealing himself and them under the bodies of the sheep which the Cyclops let out of his cave.

The parallels of this folk-tale are numerous, and it will be sufficient here to mention the following as the best examples. They follow the type closely. In the Celtic Fionn Cycle<sup>1</sup> the hero Fionn kills a one-eyed giant by shooting an arrow into his eye; in the Basque tale of the Tartaro, who, like Polyphemus, had but one eye, the monster was similarly treated by the hero.<sup>2</sup> The Cornish giant of St. Michael's Mount was a Cyclops, too.<sup>3</sup> In a Sicilian story the hero is a monk whose companion was eaten by a cave-dwelling ogre; the monk blinded this monster and effected his escape in the skin of a sheep. In a Russian variant a one-eyed witch makes a meal off a tailor, and is blinded by his friend the smith.<sup>4</sup> An English story<sup>5</sup> tells of a Yorkshire giant who, like the one slain by Jack the Giant-Killer, ground men's bones for bread; he was blinded by a lad whom he kept

<sup>1</sup> J. G. Campbell, "The Fians" (1891), p. 207.

<sup>2</sup> W. Webster, "Basque Legends" (1879), p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Hunt, *l.c.*, p. 53.

<sup>4</sup> Ralston, *l.c.*, p. 178.

<sup>5</sup> Hartland, "English Folk- and Fairy-Tales," p. 87.

prisoner. When the boy escaped, he killed the monster's dog, covered himself with its hide, and ran barking between the giant's legs. An episode in Sinbad the Sailor affords another example closely following the Polyphemus epic. There are also parallels among the Lapps and Kirghiz, in India, Persia, East Africa, America,<sup>1</sup> and Melanesia.

Belonging to the same type of cannibal folk-tale (exophagous) is that story, so popular with children, of Hansel and Grethel, which was introduced into England by the Brothers Grimm, and forms the subject of Humperdinck's delightful opera. In this the ogress is fooled into being baked in her own oven. This gullibility of ogres and giants is a prominent feature in many fairy-tales, and indicates the contempt felt by a superior race for inferior peoples. The plot of the story is, briefly, as follows. Two children, Hansel and Grethel, wander through the forest and come upon the house of a cannibal witch. She entices them to enter, and fattens the boy in a cage while she makes a household drudge of his sister. When Hansel appears to be "in condition" for eating, the witch orders Grethel to heat the oven, and, this done, tells her to go in and test its heat. The girl pretends she cannot, and the old woman shows her how to enter by putting her own head in, whereupon Grethel pushes her in and bolts the door, so that the cannibal is roasted to death. Of this story there are Magyar, Portuguese, Lapp, Norse, Indian, Persian, and African variants. The first named of these belongs to the Cinderella cycle.

A third series of stories belonging to the first type records how the wife or child of an ogre is served up for dinner, or killed, by the superior craft of his intended victim. These have a close connection with the last

<sup>1</sup> The story of Glooskap, the Red Indian hero, in which an ogre in serpent form is blinded by a red-hot stick. See C. G. Leland, "Algonquin Legends of New England" (1872), p. 104.

series. To them belong the Celtic story of Maol, in which the ogre's wife and children are all victimized; and a Swedish tale, recalling Hansel and Grethel, in which a youngest son steals the ogre's treasure, is caught, fattened, and the oven made ready. When Mrs. Ogre tells him to go in, he, with the usual politeness of the superior hero, says "Ladies first," pushes her in, and bangs-to the door. Other parallels are the Italian variant of "Thirteenth," which is horrible in its detail, the Basque story of Malbrouk, the Russian tale of Baba Yaga, and the Norse one of Buttercup; while there are still others from Madagascar, Japan, America, East Africa, etc. There is a Scots story which must be specially mentioned. This is the tale of Molly (or Mally) Whuppie,<sup>1</sup> in which three sisters come to a giant's house, where they sleep. Mally notices that their host places straw ropes round their necks, and gold necklaces round those of his own daughters. She exchanges these when the latter are asleep, and the giant consequently kills his own children. The remainder of this tale will be given when discussing the Fortunate Youngest Son cycle of stories (Chapter X).

It is noteworthy how, in many of these stories, thefts from the monster, giant, or ogre occupy a prominent place. This incident occurs in many of the versions of the Youngest Son cycle, in Jack and the Beanstalk, and in the Red Indian story of the Ball Carrier.

Lastly, there is a series of tales in which the cannibal figures not as an ogre, but as an ordinary human being *of another tribe*. In one class of this series the hero or heroine is captured by cannibals; in another they marry single cannibals. Examples of the first are met with among the Kafirs, Eskimo, Karens, Chinese, American Indians, etc., but to detail them would become a wearisome reiteration to the reader. Some of them, however, possess the interesting feature of being made use of to

<sup>1</sup> Jacobs, *l.c.*, p. 125.

account for natural facts, a form of myth of origin. Thus, the Ainos tell of a hairy cannibal giant with one eye, his only vital part (*cf.* the Polyphemus epic). He was slain by a valiant hunter, who hit his eye with an arrow and then burned his body. From the ashes came all the flies and mosquitoes in the country. The end of this monster is paralleled in a similar story told by the coast tribes of North West America.

Of the marriage with wives or husbands, having cannibal tastes, belonging to another race, examples occur in Norse legends, India, Siam, Africa, and among the Eskimo. The type also figures in some variants of the Bluebeard cycle. In India stories of man-eating Rakshasi are very common.<sup>1</sup>

Probably all the exophagous cannibal stories owe their origin to the horror with which a superior race that had abandoned cannibalism viewed the habit among the lower races which still practised it. As in the case of certain marriage customs already dealt with (p. 35), this disgust would result in exaggerated descriptions of the abhorred tribes, converting them into loathsome beings, ogres, demons, and monsters. Not only in antiquity, but in comparatively modern times, there is no lack of examples of this exaggerated execration, based sometimes upon truth, and sometimes the invention of a virulent race hatred. I have mentioned how the word "ogre" is said to be derived from the Tartar invaders called "Oigour," and that the ogre of French tales is "Le Sarrasin." So also "Hun" and "Hungar" became synonymous with ogre in Europe. "Among the Zulus," says Macculloch,<sup>2</sup> "the word *amazimu* is synonymous with ogre; historically, the Amazimu were a tribe who adopted cannibalism and fled to the mountains, where they were exterminated. So the Weendijoes, or men returned to cannibalism, are feared in the Labrador and Ojibway districts. Too often,

<sup>1</sup> Lal Bahari Day, "Folk-Tales of Bengal" (1889).

<sup>2</sup> *l.c.*, p. 301.

without any basis in fact, cannibalism has been a charge easily brought against any body of men by their enemies. First the Jews, then the primitive Christians, were accused of it by the Pagans; the Templars, at the time of their overthrow, were charged with it; and it has from medieval times onward been repeatedly asserted popularly of the Jews. One of the commonest accusations against the persecuted Jews in Russia is that of ritual cannibalism." So persistent have been these charges against the Jews that in 1892 Dr. Hermann Strack published a refutation.<sup>1</sup> In the Napoleonic wars English nurses frightened their charges by threats of a cannibalistic "Boney," and the great war of 1914-18 was not without its stories of Germans converting their victims of battle into a convenient form of margarine.

Passing now to the second main type of cannibal folk-tale, in which the incident is represented as a perverted taste, we find three forms of story, variants of which occur practically universally. These need not detain us long. The first series of tales tells of a girl, usually the offspring of normal parents, who develops a taste for human flesh and eats her relations or any other victims she can get hold of. Such stories occur in Russian, Serbian, Tuscan, Greek, Icelandic, Samoan, and Eskimo folklore. In many tales the incident seems to point to a sun-myth. The typical story<sup>2</sup> is Russian, and may be given here briefly as the best example. A girl becomes very strong and develops a universal appetite. Her brother Ivan leaves home to live with the Sun's sister, and, on his return, finds his sister has eaten every one in the vicinity. She leaves him on the pretence of getting him food, but a mouse warns him that she is sharpening her teeth in order to devour him. Ivan runs away, pursued by his hungry sister, and is saved from her.

The second series is that of the unnatural mother, who

<sup>1</sup> "The Jew and Human Sacrifice." Trans. by H. Blanchamp (1909).

<sup>2</sup> Macculloch, *l.c.*, p. 294.

kills her own child and serves it up to her husband. The best-known story of this type is Grimm's "The Juniper Tree," although in this it is a stepmother who replaces the mother. This unnatural woman, jealous of her stepson's beauty, kills him and makes him into puddings, with which she regales her husband. Her own daughter, however, who loves the boy, buries the bones beneath a juniper tree. From out of the tree flies the boy in the guise of a beautiful bird, which sings:—

My mother killed her little son;  
My father grieved when I was gone;  
My sister loved me best of all;  
She laid her kerchief over me,  
And took my bones that they might lie  
Underneath the juniper tree.

Kywitt, kywitt, what a beautiful bird am I!<sup>1</sup>

The song attracts a goldsmith, a shoemaker, and a miller, from whom the bird obtains a gold chain, a pair of red shoes, and a millstone. With the first two he rewards his father and his stepsister, and with the last he crushes the wicked stepmother, being then restored to life and happiness in his proper form. A Magyar variant<sup>2</sup> follows "The Juniper Tree" closely, and there are Scots, English, Swedish, Breton, and Malagasy versions. The incident also occurs in some examples of the Cinderella cycle. The Scots variant is the Milk-White Doo.<sup>3</sup> A man had a wife, son, and daughter. He brought home a hare for dinner, which the wife cooked, but kept on tasting until none was left. She therefore called in the son Johnnie on the pretence of combing his head, killed him, and put him in the pot. Her husband returned and ate the boy for dinner, but noticed his hands and feet. The wife put him off by saying that he talked nonsense. The daughter, Katy, gathered the

<sup>1</sup> It may be remembered that the mad Marguerite sings this song in the dungeon scene in "Faust."

<sup>2</sup> W. H. Jones and L. L. Kroff, "Folk-Tales of the Magyar" (1899), p. 298.

<sup>3</sup> Sir G. Douglas, "Scottish Fairy- and Folk-Tales" (n. d.), p. 5.

bones after dinner and put them beneath a stone at the door—

Where they grew and they grew,  
To a milk-white doo,  
That took its wings,  
And away it flew.

The dove flew to where two women were washing clothes, and cried :—

Pew, pew,  
My minny me slew,  
My daddy me chew,  
My sister gathered my banes,  
And put them between two milk-white stanes ;  
And I grew and I grew  
To a milk-white doo,  
And I took to my wings, and away I flew.

The dove thus obtained the clothes, some silver from a man, and a millstone from the miller. He then rewarded sister, father, and mother according to their worth, and flew away, so that the "goodman and his dochter

Lived happy and died happy,  
And never drank out of a dry cappy."

The English story is that of The Rose Tree.<sup>1</sup> Here the boy is son to the second wife, and it is the girl whom the stepmother kills while combing her hair. The heart and liver were stewed, and the husband ate them, while the son refused. The latter buried what was left of his stepsister under a rose tree. A bird came to the tree and sang :—

My wicked mother slew me,  
My dear father ate me ;  
My little brother whom I love  
Sits below, and I sing above  
Stick, stock, stone dead.

As in the other stories, the bird obtains red shoes from the cobbler, a gold watch and chain from the jeweller, and a millstone from the miller. She rattled the mill-

<sup>1</sup> Jacobs, *l.c.*, p. 15.

stone against the eaves of the house, and the mother said, "It thunders." The boy ran out and got the red shoes. Next the husband ran out and received the watch and chain. The third time the mother said: "It thunders again; perhaps the thunder has brought something for me." She ran out and got the millstone on her head.

Other instances of stories of cannibalism from perverted taste occur all over the world, among Red Indians, Malays, Mongols, Ainos, Australians, and other peoples.

Finally, a third series comprises stories of cannibalism due to famine. Since famine is the frequent cause of the practice, such stories are certain to obtain a place in folk-tale. They have already been noticed earlier in this Chapter.

The cannibal stories of the second type no doubt arose "from those occasional lapses into the customs of a savage past of which the history of civilization is full." Such lapses would occur from insanity, lust, and famine. Macculloch<sup>1</sup> closes his comprehensive discussion of the whole subject of anthropophagy with the significant sentence: "Suffice it to say that the realism of the folk-tales of cannibalism as a perverted taste, or through famine, comes far short of the reality which that evidence contains."

Before closing this Chapter allusion must be made to vampire stories. It was once universally believed that the dead man lived on in the grave, making it a home, and the spirit consuming the food-offerings left by survivors. The vampire idea is merely a gruesome extension of this belief, and there is, therefore, nothing strange in the conception that the corpse might walk and leave its home to devour the living, especially when people saw that food was placed upon his grave and that it frequently disappeared during the night.

<sup>1</sup> *l.c.*, p. 305.



### CHAPTER III

## PRIMITIVE BELIEFS OCCURRING IN FAIRY-TALE

"Time is a great preserver, but no reverencer, as we see when the 'hocus est corpus' of the priest elevating the host gets corrupted into the 'hocus pocus' of the *prestidigitateur*."  
—M. ROALFE COX.

### § 1. *Animism*

HAVING discussed some of the primitive customs occurring in fairy-tale, we must now turn to the influence exercised upon it by primitive beliefs. This influence, as might be expected when the genesis of the folk-tale is understood, is a very wide one. It may be dealt with most conveniently under the heads of Animism, Transformations, Dragons, Sleep, Fetishism, the Renewal of Life, Magic and Sorcery, and Tabu, and will occupy this and the succeeding Chapter. The idea of the separable soul will be best deferred for consideration until the large cycle of stories depending upon it is discussed. From a study of these beliefs it will be made clear how, as Miss Cox has said,<sup>1</sup> "the serious beliefs of our fore-parents form the staple of our old wives' tales, and linger on in nursery lore."

I have already pointed out in the first Chapter that primitive man, after a preliminary period of Naturism, entered into that of Animism, and how these stages of primitive belief throw much light upon the origin of fairies. Perhaps no period of human development before the age of advancing science in which we now live has exercised so great an influence upon man's beliefs and actions. This is especially true when we consider that

<sup>1</sup> "Introduction to Folklore," p. 235.

until the advent of the scientific age—the age of real knowledge, tested by experiment—every other development was strongly tinged with pre-existing superstitions, among which those arising from Animism played a predominant part. I have already referred to Animism in more than one connection, and now have to discuss it in relation to a special type of folk-tale. To it we owe those marvellous stories in which animals talk like men, hold conversations with them, and are grateful to them for various services in return for which they guide and assist them. In a word, they enter largely into men's lives not merely as a means of subsistence, but as companions and friends. In these tales man is essentially one with the other animals. Such incidents play a very large part in many fairy-tales, as in "Puss-in-Boots," "Red Riding Hood," "Whittington and his Cat," and, going further afield, in the animal stories told by primitive races all over the world. Major Tremearne and others have collected numerous examples of these among the Hausa and other African races; but the famous "Uncle Remus" collection is, perhaps, the best known. This conception of intimate social intercourse is to be found in various sacred writings; it is frequent in Buddhist and other Eastern literature, and occurred among the Greeks and Romans and in medieval times. In our own Bible we have Balaam's ass; and Solomon is reputed to have understood trees, beasts, fowls, creeping things, and fishes (Kings, iv, 29–34)—a passage considered by the credulous to mean that he understood the language of trees and animals. Indeed, in the Koran (xxvii, 17) Solomon is made to say: "O Men, we have been taught the speech of birds, and are endued with everything. This is indeed a clear boon from God."

This union of man and the lower animals is in harmony with primitive thought, and is traceable to the stages of Naturism and Animism. But the imputation of the characteristics of man to brutes and inanimate things is

more than primitive—it is the perpetually recurring will-o'-the-wisp of our imagination. When man's essential distinction came to be recognized by widening knowledge, the ideas of metempsychosis and later of enchantment grew up as a support for the conviction that still haunts us. Possibly enchantment is a later gloss on earlier, bolder Animism.

The ability to talk and act precisely like men is, as Macculloch<sup>1</sup> points out, “no mere *façon de parler*: it is accepted as quite natural by children; the peasantry think it may once have happened; savages believe thoroughly in it; and we are, therefore, once more driven to the conclusion that the talking animals of all folk-tales descend from an age when it was one of the commonplaces of thought and belief that animals did and could talk, and were, in effect, nothing but men and women in animal shape.” To quote two authorities as to the primitive savage and the European peasant in relation to these conceptions will be sufficient. Sir Everard im Thurn<sup>2</sup> says: “To the ear of the savage, animals certainly seem to talk. This fact is universally evident, and ought to be fully recognized.” According to Webster,<sup>3</sup> the Basque peasants often begin their stories by saying: “This happened, sir, in the time when all animals and all things could speak.” One of the Christmas and New Year's Day superstitions of the peasants of France, Germany, England, and other European countries is that animals have the gift of speech at these times, and that it is death to men to hear them exercise it.

The remarkable astuteness shown by some animals in folk-tale, and their ability to get the better of all the others, is a feature that cannot fail to be familiar to all readers of “Uncle Remus.” His “Brer Rabbit” is the greatest trickster of them all, as he is in the stories told by the Bantus, Mongols, and Coreans. So to Hottentots,

<sup>1</sup> *l.c.*, p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> “Among the Indians of Guiana” (1883), p. 351.

<sup>3</sup> W. Webster, *l.c.*, p. xi.

Bushmen, and Berbers is the jackal, and to the Hausa the spider. Examples could easily be multiplied.

It is a wide-spread belief also that the various classes of animals have a social organization of their own, living in communities and possessing kings. How old these are may be seen by the following Egyptian fairy-tale, written in the hieratic script on papyrus, and dating from the Middle Kingdom (2160-1788 B.C.). It tells of a sailor who was journeying to the king's copper mines in a big ship manned by a hundred and fifty chosen sailors. The ship was wrecked in the open sea, and the sole survivor tells his story: "Those who were on board perished, and not one escaped. Then a wave of the sea bore me along and cast me up upon an island, and I passed three days there by myself, with none but my own heart for a companion; I laid me down and slept in a hollow in a thicket, and I hugged the shade. And I lifted my legs (i.e., I walked about), so that I might find out what to put in my mouth, and I found there figs and grapes, and all kinds of large berries....." An enormous serpent, overlaid with gold and having eyebrows of lapis-lazuli, seizes him very gently and carries him off. The serpent, who proves to be the king of the island, insists on hearing his story, at the end of which he bids him: "Have no fear, have no fear, O little one, and let not thy face be sad—God hath spared thy life and brought thee to this island, where there is food." The serpent tells the sailor that at the end of four months a ship will arrive in which he will return home. All comes to pass as predicted, and the sailor returns laden with gifts of the products of the island.

But tales about animals, their talk, and their relations with men are so old as to merge into the prehistoric. *Æsop's* fables (usually dated about the sixth century B.C.) owed their source to much earlier ones. They are found in the Buddhist *Jatakas*, and in the ancient Persian Fables of Bidpai (themselves coming from older Indian

sources). The story of the Lion and the Mouse is found in an Egyptian papyrus of the time of Rameses III, and beast tales were among the tablets in the library of Assur-bani-pal.

In folk-tale men often profit by the wisdom of animals, which they derive from overhearing their talk. Thus, in Grimm's story of *The Three Crows*, Konrad learns from the birds how a princess can be cured by the ashes of a blue flower, how a miraculous dew will restore sight to the blind, and how a spring of the finest water will be found by digging under a certain stone in the market place. Konrad turns this information to his own advantage, wherefor the crows, exasperated at having been overheard, punish his treacherous companions by mistake.

Another feature of these animal stories is the idea that animal traits can be transferred by eating their possessor. This is a further development of the power to acquire their language. We have seen that a reason for cannibalism was the transference of the victim's qualities; hence, just as the eating of a dead enemy will confer his valour, so the consumption of an animal or some portion of him will impart his strength or wisdom. Thus, to quote but one example, the salmon was considered by the Celts to be a fish of remarkable wisdom—wisdom capable of being passed to the fortunate angler who caught and devoured one. Sometimes the ingestion of a certain fish confers fertility upon women and animals. One story<sup>1</sup> tells how a fisherman catches the king of fishes, which, before it dies, bids him give part to his wife, part to his mare, and part to his bitch; all will then (and do) bear three offspring.

It is highly probable that many of these ideas arose in *Totemism*. To the savage mind animate and inanimate nature are one. In this the primitive man and the

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Macculloch, *l.c.*, p. 381.

modern man of science are in accord, but in the fundamental conception only. It is in the reasoning by which they reach it that they are as the poles asunder. The former reasons through his imagination, the latter from proved facts. Hence to the savage mind theories of descent from birds, beasts, and plants, sun, moon, and stars, wind,<sup>1</sup> and rain, are acceptable without difficulty as probable and possible occurrences. Totemism, which has been so completely and ably investigated by Sir J. G. Frazer, is the term applied to the belief in the sacred nature of certain animals and plants from which men claim descent. The term *totem* is a corruption of the word applied by the Red Indians to the plant, animal, or natural object representing the ancestor or protector of the group of persons sharing its name or crest. Totemism is by no means confined to the American Indians, but occurs in Australia, Samoa, Asia, and Africa. Traces of it are found in the early history of the Germans, Greeks, and Latins, and among the Semitic peoples. It has been suggested that there are relics of totemism to be met with among the early British tribes, as instanced (to take one example only) by the men of Ossory, who were called by a name meaning the "Wild red deer." "The Merovingian princes traced their origin to a sea monster; and the pedigrees of the Anglo-Saxon kings contain names which seem to be connected with legends of a descent from animals."<sup>2</sup>

Totemism is a conception which has largely influenced many primitive customs, especially in regard to marriage, and, to a less extent, food. It is thus probably reflected in the numerous tales of animal ancestry. Partly from this, aided by man's myth-making faculty, have arisen various theories of human origin. Leland<sup>3</sup> mentions one theory, that of the Algonquins, who say: "Of old all

<sup>1</sup> Hiawatha, in Longfellow's poem, was born of Wenonah and the West Wind.

<sup>2</sup> M. E. Cox, "Introduction to Folklore," p. 98.

<sup>3</sup> *I.c.*, p. 109.

animals were as men; the Master (Glooskap) gave them the shapes they now wear." The Hareskin Indians believe that in the beginning men were animals and animals men, and that their conditions were exchanged. In Polynesia it is considered by the natives that they are descended from beings who were once animals which became men. Under such conditions it can readily be understood how legends of marriages between men or women and beasts arose. When the men of one particular totem entertained an aversion to those of another, they would consider them as but half-human, so that to marry a member of the detested clan might be considered as espousing an animal. Moreover, every classical scholar is acquainted with the numerous legends in which gods put on animal shape to visit man, actuated usually by amorous motives. These legends are survivals of a time when the gods were believed to be animals, and are possibly derived from totemism. With the belief in marriages between men and animals naturally went that of animals born of human mothers. There are plenty of such legends told not only among modern primitive savages, but in classical mythology. Thus, the Dog-rib tribe owed its origin to certain of the puppies borne by a woman to a stranger who was a man by day and a dog by night<sup>1</sup>; while the Cretan Minotaur was a monster, half-man, half-bull, the offspring of Pasiphaë and a bull. It may be remembered by some readers that the famous secret of Glamis Castle, as stated by A. G. C. Liddell in his "Notes from the Life of an Ordinary Mortal," is that in a secret chamber a monster, half-man, half-toad, is confined in chains and fed on raw flesh by Lord Strathmore, the factor, and the eldest son. Legends of this class owe their origin to old beliefs, possibly tinged by actual instances of monstrous births.

In the beast marriages of fairy-tale the animal partner

<sup>1</sup> E. Petitot, "Traditions Indiennes du Canada Nord-Ouest" (1886), p. 311.

is usually under enchantment, as in the cases of Beauty and the Beast and the Frog-bridegroom. Here the enchantment incident is probably a later gloss to counter-act decay in belief.

Another superstition of every age and country which is possibly derived from totemism is that of the *guiding beast*, or *helpful beast*. Many tribal legends are founded upon this belief in the guidance by some animal to a place of settlement. Thus, in a Greek story, Cyrene (from *κόραξ*, a raven) was founded, about 631 B.C., by Battus, who was led to the spot by a raven. From such legends it is only a step to the helpful animals of fairy-tale, like the doves which sorted the peas from the ashes in Grimm's story of Ashputtel (a variant of the Cinderella cycle), and the cat in Puss-in-Boots. In many of the tales belonging to the Cinderella cycle there is a helpful cow which is really the heroine's mother who has been transformed. Miss Cox (whose investigation of this cycle I shall refer to later) thinks that this cow was actually Cinderella's mother in the original story, but that, as the savage element in a tale is abandoned when it ceases to be acceptable to later thought, the fairy god-mother is substituted for the helpful beast.

Very frequently the helpful beast is actuated by feelings of gratitude. The help is usually reciprocal and granted to the hero because the latter gave the animal food when asked, performed some other service for it, or enabled it to live in happier circumstances by buying it. The grateful beasts range all over the animal kingdom, and often perform seemingly impossible tasks for their benefactor, such as separating different kinds of grain. Insects are frequently met with as carrying out this difficult work, or the more simple one of indicating the right bride (see p. 34). Instances will occur in succeeding Chapters.



§ 2. *Transformations*

I have already alluded in the preceding Section to the transformation of beings from human into animal form, usually ascribed in fairy-tale to enchantment. The idea now requires to be considered with more attention. Transformation is the logical sequence of Animism; the result of that primitive belief which makes the death of a man from the fall of a tree due to some motive of revenge on the part of the latter which the man has incurred, by some action, at the hands of the spirit dwelling therein. It is a wide-spread savage belief that the souls of the dead animate trees. This superstition has led to the regarding of trees as sacred, to the legends of speaking and bleeding plants, to the planting of trees as life-tokens (a superstition to be considered when dealing with the Separable Soul), and to numerous other items of plant-lore.

To the primitive mind there is nothing illogical in these beliefs. If every man, animal, and plant, every rock and stone, every star, river, and wind, is animated by a spirit, there is nothing to prevent such spirits passing from one object into another, especially when to dream of an absent friend suggests the ability of one spirit to visit another, or when the resemblance of a child to his grandfather postulates a fresh incarnation of the spirit of the latter in the body of the former. Consequently, since our fairy-tales embody the original or modified forms of ancestral beliefs, we find transformations and transmigrations abundantly represented in them; indeed, no incident in fairy-tale is better known. The numerous variants of the Swan-maiden cycle, in which birds cast aside their feather mantles to become beautiful maidens, furnish a world-wide example, as do also the werewolf legends and the belief in lycanthropy. The latter superstition lingers even now among European peasants, and, strange—almost incredible—as it may appear, there have

been "persons of culture" who are sufficiently ignorant of psychology and folklore as to have scribbled books affirming their complete belief in the existence of men who can transform themselves into wolves at stated periods for the purpose of devouring those whom they can lure to destruction !

Another point to be remembered is that a belief in transformation receives apparent confirmation in the wonderful changes which are constantly seen in nature. The emergence of the chick from the egg, the metamorphosis of the caterpillar into the chrysalis and of the chrysalis into the butterfly, of the dragon-fly from its unprepossessing, dirty-looking larva, or of the acorn into the tiny seedling-oak, all lend themselves to the human predilection for the marvellous. Such natural phenomena make the idea of an animal turning into a man, a tree, or a stone, or *vice versa*, easy to understand. Every savage believes he has the power to effect such a transformation, although he generally leaves such matters to the medicine-man. The belief is perpetuated in fairy-tale ; the witch changes the hero into a mouse, cat, or parrot. It is frequent in primitive religious conceptions wherein occur animal gods, such as the cow-goddess (Isis-Hathor) of the Egyptians, the hare-god (Michabo) of the Algonquins, and the transformations effected by the gods for the beguilement of the weaker sex. In the Bible the belief is exemplified in the transformation of Lot's wife into a pillar of salt,<sup>1</sup> of Satan into a serpent, of Yahweh into a burning bush. In fairy-tale, the Frog-Bridegroom, the Prince in Beauty and the Beast, and the cow-mother of the Cinderella cycle are notable instances of transformation.

<sup>1</sup> Transformation into a rock or stone is a universal belief, probably originating in (1) the forms of weathered rocks (such as the resemblance of two rocks at Land's End to Dr. Johnson and Dr. Syntax) ; (2) the occurrence of fossils ; or (3) the confusion of sepulchral monolithic monuments with the ghost of the person buried. An example of persons converted into stone as a punishment is afforded by the Cornish legend of "The Hurlers" on Craddock Moor.

Macculloch<sup>1</sup> has given an excellent study of the incident of transformation under the following heads. He has illustrated it with a wealth of reference, of which space will permit only a few examples being given here.

1. *Transformation by a Sorcerer or Witch*, exemplified by the classical story of Circe, who changed men into swine—an incident which, speaking metaphorically, is only too frequent in real life throughout the ages. In fairy-tale it is illustrated by Beauty and the Beast, by certain variants of the Youngest Son cycle, and by the True Wife cycle. In the last-named a king's wife is changed during child-birth into an animal by the sorcery of some woman who, jealous of her victim's position, usurps her place. The true wife comes nightly to the palace door, and says that she must keep her new form unless her husband saves her within a certain period. Informed of this, the king keeps watch, and restores her by taking her in his arms. Of this tale there are Breton, German, Swedish, Russian, Greek, Asiatic, and Italian variants. An English parallel is the legend of the Laidly Worm of Spindleston Heugh,<sup>2</sup> in which the witch transforms her step-daughter into a "laidly worm" until her hitherto absent brother, Childe Wynd, kisses her thrice. Then she recovers her proper form, and the witch is changed into a toad.<sup>3</sup>

2. *Transformation by Bathing, Eating, or Drinking*. The first is frequent in Eastern tales, of which the story of The Bald Wife<sup>4</sup> is one example. It occurs also in European and savage folklore. Transformation by eating or drinking is more wide in its occurrence. The collection of the Brothers Grimm affords an illustration in the story of The Nose Tree, in which the consumption of the fruit of a certain tree results in a ludicrous and enormous

<sup>1</sup> *l.c.*, p. 149 *sq.*

<sup>2</sup> Jacobs, *l.c.*, p. 183.

<sup>3</sup> A kiss is frequently introduced into fairy-tales as a condition of release from enchantment. The act of kissing is a very old rite of worship, and survives in our modern legal oath. Of course, the more repulsive the object to be kissed the more merit and the more potent the performance.

<sup>4</sup> Lal Bahari Day, *l.c.*, p. 269.

growth of the nose. In the tale of The Brother and Sister, in the same collection, a cruel step-mother enchants the water from which the boy wishes to drink, and his sister warns him lest, by slaking his thirst at the different brooks, he be changed into a tiger, wolf, or faun.

3. *Self-Transformation.* The power of changing form is universally ascribed to gods, spirits, sorcerers, and even ordinary human beings. The belief is found in many mythologies. Witches and wizards frequently transform themselves into animals, such as a wolf or hare (European), a tiger (India, Malaysia), a leopard, hyena, or crocodile (Africa), a cat (China, American negroes), a jaguar (British Guiana), a bear, fox, wolf, owl, or snake (American Indians). The folk-tale tells usually of an animal which disappears on being wounded, after which a witch is found similarly hurt. The belief is world-wide, and the following story, quoted by Udal<sup>1</sup> as given him in 1893, shows how it lingers still among superstitious peasants:—

A labourer in the Isle of Purbeck had noticed a hare which he encountered several times at a certain stile in the evening as he was going home. A friend advised him to put a sixpence in a gun and shoot it, so he went to a shop (in Wareham?) and borrowed a gun and shot at the hare the next time he met it, and as it limped away he threw his sickle after it and struck it, but could not catch it. When he got home a neighbour said to him: "Old Nanny's a-dying, and wants to see thee." "Shure! do she now?" "Ees, and she's got a cut all across her back as if some one had cut it with a rip-hook [reaping hook]."

4. *The Transformation Combat.* Lovers of the Arabian Nights will remember how a princess fought with a genie, who had changed the hero into a monkey. The genie appeared as a lion, and the princess cut him in half. The head became a scorpion, the princess a serpent, after which they both turned into eagles. They then changed into a cat and a wolf—the cat into a worm, and the wolf into a cock. Next the genie transformed himself from worm

<sup>1</sup> J. B. Udal, *l.c.*, p. 208.

to pomegranate, and the cock picked up the seeds. One seed became a fish, whereupon the cock chased it as a pike. Finally the combatants resumed their original forms, and the princess destroyed her enemy by fire. This is one of the best known of the transformation combat stories, which are common in many lands. They occur in Greek mythology in the legend of Proteus, whose name survives in our word "protean." Any one wishing to learn the future from Proteus was obliged to seize him when he had risen from the sea and was sleeping among the rocks. Once caught, he assumed every possible shape, in order to escape the necessity of prophesying; but whenever he saw that his efforts were fruitless he, like a recalcitrant witness in the hands of clever counsel, resumed his proper form and told the truth. Macculloch,<sup>1</sup> in dealing with the myth of Proteus, points out its parallel in a Red Indian story,<sup>2</sup> in which Efwá-éké changed himself successively into "a tree, a bear, an elan, a castor, and a corpse," to deceive his enemies, and draws attention to the frequency with which folk-tales are preserved in sacred books as part of the history of the gods. Such records must be regarded simply as folk-tales, and one must not be misled into attaching to them any doctrinal or allegorical interpretations. Biblical examples will be found in my "Story of the Bible."

5. *Transformation of Fugitive Lovers, and of the Articles cast away by them.* In this class of incident the hero falls into the hands of a witch, or ogre, and is set various tasks. In these his captor's daughter helps him, and they run away together. When pursued, the girl transforms her lover and herself, or throws down various articles, which are changed into obstacles to the pursuit. The incident is found in Europe, Africa, and Samoa, among the Red Indians, Hottentots, Tartars, Ainos, and Malagasy, and is so uniform as to suggest a common

<sup>1</sup> *l.c.*, p. 166.

<sup>2</sup> E. Petitot, *l.c.*, p. 223.

origin. It has been surmised that, in its earliest form, the incident described the mere throwing down of objects which delayed the pursuer, without any transformation at all, just as Atalanta was delayed by the golden apples which Milanion cast down in the race between them.

### § 3. *Dragons*

The monstrous dragon which is the scourge of the district by its demand for a regular tale of victims, usually virgins, and which is ultimately slain by a hero who thus rescues the princess figuring as the monster's latest victim, is another world-wide subject of folk-tale. It usually forms one incident in a long and complicated series of adventures, the main features of which are as follows :—

1. A fisherman catches the king of fishes, which, when dying, tells him to give give portions to wife, mare, and bitch, with the result that each will bear three offspring, and to bury the remainder, from which will grow three trees, the life-tokens of the three brothers.

2. The eldest son rescues a princess from a victim-demanding dragon whom he decapitates, removing the tongues from the heads.

3. He leaves the princess, who returns home ; a charcoal burner takes the heads to the palace and demands her in marriage, but is confounded by the reappearance of the eldest son, who produces the tongues.

4. After marriage the eldest son sees a castle from his window and visits it, contrary to his wife's advice. He meets a witch, and is turned into stone.

5. His life-token warns those at home of his fate ; the second son goes to his rescue, is mistaken by the princess for her husband, repeats his brother's folly, and is similarly transformed.

6. The youngest brother sets out in his turn, is too clever for the witch, and restores his brothers to life.

The classical story is, of course, that of Perseus and

Andromeda, in which Perseus overcomes the witch Medusa before rescuing the maiden. Variants are found in Russian, Lithuanian, Swedish, Danish, German, Greek, Tyrolese, Sicilian, Pisan, Spanish, Portuguese, French, and Celtic folk-tale.

It will be noted in the above analysis that the dragon-slaying incident forms only a part. Research suggests that it is really a separate tale, which has been incorporated in certain other story cycles; and the surmise is strengthened by several stories in which the simple killing of the monster and rescue of the maiden, or the slaying of a dragon by a hero to whom the king has promised his daughter, occurs alone. The former version is found in the Arabian Nights' story of the Son of the Sultan of Yemen, and variants occur in Senegambia, Japan, Borneo, and among the Red Indians. Sometimes the hero does not marry the princess, but is a celibate, as in the story of the rescue by Hercules of Hesione from the monster sent against her by Poseidon, in the myth of Euryphylus, and the legend of St. George. One group of dragon tales (the Dragon of Bordeaux and the Lambton Worm,<sup>1</sup> for example) betrays Christian influence. In some of these saints are invoked for the monster's destruction.

In the second type the maiden is promised in marriage, but is not exposed to the dragon. This occurs in Roumanian, Esthonian, Persian, Kabyle, and Red Indian variants. In India the rôle of dragon is taken by a rakshasi, as in the Story of the Rakshasas.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, in many tales from Norway, Switzerland, and France a criminal is pardoned if he succeeds in killing the dragon.<sup>3</sup> These legends usually take the form of local tradition, complete with names and dates, of which the following is an example: At Niort a deserter was condemned to death in 1589, and was promised pardon if he

<sup>1</sup> Hartland, "English Folk- and Fairy-Tales," p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> Day, *l.c.*, p. 61.

<sup>3</sup> Macculloch, *l.c.*, p. 392.

slew a certain dragon. He was asphyxiated by the monster's breath, although he covered his face with a mask to avoid it. The monument erected to him is stated to have been still standing in 1788. Another local legend (but without the condemned criminal) belonging to Jersey accounted for the prehistoric mound upon which stands Prince's Tower. This legend recalls the treacherous servant incident referred to on page 36.

From every part of the world have come stories of the depredations of the monsters. No doubt some of these arose from the tradition of human victims offered to a guardian water spirit (see p. 8). Indeed, the sacrifice is probably the bed-rock of the Dragon Legend. Instances occur in Mongolia, Boeotia, India, New Guinea, among the Sea-Dyaks, American Indians, Eskimo, Ainos, and in Celtic literature. Such tales are found in many parts of the Highlands, and one will be seen in Boswell's "Life of Johnson," where the story of the sea-horse of the Sound of Raasay is given. Macculloch<sup>1</sup> cites the anghisky, or water-horse, of Lough Mask, which devoured children and pregnant women until it was destroyed by a monk. This is supposed to have occurred about forty years ago!

The origin of the stories of the Dragon cycle is an interesting speculation. "Early man," says Macculloch,<sup>2</sup> "may have encountered belated survivals of the 'dragons of the prime'—Pterodactyls, Dinosaurs, Plesiosaurs, Ichthyosaurs." Miss Cox<sup>3</sup> expresses a similar opinion when she says: "Their pedigree may be traced to traditional accounts of huge creatures which actually existed in prehistoric times." Only an ignorance of geology could suggest such an hypothesis, for these gigantic monsters became extinct before the Tertiary Period, æons before man appeared on earth, even longer before he began to think. It is, however, possible that the discovery of the fossil remains of gigantic saurians, and of

<sup>1</sup> *l.c.*, p. 393.

<sup>2</sup> *l.c.*, p. 395.

<sup>3</sup> *l.c.*, p. 237.



their huge footprints, may have suggested to the primitive mind the continued existence of such creatures. It is much more likely that huge apes, great mammoths and rhinoceri, predatory mammals—such as the cave-bear and sabre-toothed tiger, crocodiles, and enormous snakes, gave a foundation to such stories. These animals were, indeed, co-existent with early man. Their known depredations, tintured by the distorted imagination engendered by fear, would play an important part in the evolution of tales of mysterious monsters. The study of modern savages affords an insight into the psychology of our own primitive ancestors; and how such legends may arise is seen among the former in the shark at Bonny, which comes daily to the river bank for its human victim. Since animals have so often been identified with gods, victims offered would become sacrificial; and the periodic demand for victims by the dragon of fairy-tale reflects regularly recurring sacrifices. It is likely also that streams of lava issuing from volcanoes may have been mistaken by primitive man for fiery dragons; human sacrifices to volcanoes have occurred not seldom.

In later times hideous lizards, crocodiles, snakes, sharks, and whales probably gave rise to stories of monsters; and legends of sea-monsters are both numerous and ancient. They are found in the Bible in the story of Jonah and the whale,<sup>1</sup> in the Chaldean account of the Creation, in the Greek myths of Typhæus and the Python, and in Egyptian, Hindu, Persian, and Scandinavian mythologies. Possibly the legend of St. George arose from the Egyptian Horus striking the crocodile.

Recent researches in Crete have revealed one way in which legends of the dragon sacrifice have arisen. One of the best-known stories of the cycle is that of the Minotaur, half-man, half-bull, kept by King Minos in the "labyrinth" constructed for him by Dædalus. Minos

<sup>1</sup> In "The Story of the Bible" I have pointed out (p. 126) that the sperm-whale and some of the large sharks are capable of swallowing a man.

exacted seven youths and seven maidens from the Athenians every nine years as a sacrifice to the monster. The "labyrinth" was probably the palace now unearthed in Crete. "From the frescoes on the walls, moreover, we learn that bull-baiting was the favourite sport, and that even maidens were trained for the 'ring.' It is not impossible that they were kidnapped from Greece (which was still in a state of barbarism), and that this was the source of the legend."<sup>1</sup>

#### § 4. *Sleep*

One of the stories most popular with children is that told by Grimm as "Briar Rose," and by Perrault as "The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood"—a story the charm of which has been further enhanced by the art of Burne Jones. It tells of a princess condemned by a malignant fairy, slighted by the omission to invite her to the christening, to die at fifteen from pricking her finger with a spindle—a curse changed by a well-disposed fairy to a century of sleep. Despite her father's efforts to avert it, the inevitable happened, and for a hundred years Briar Rose remained, with the whole court, in deep trance, while brambles grew thickly about the palace. In due time a king's son arrived, and roused the maiden with a kiss.

This is the best-known fairy-tale in which a magic sleep forms the main incident, although it occurs as a minor one in various other stories. The earliest form, chronologically speaking, of the sleeping princess appears to be that in the Teutonic stories of the Nibelungs and Volsungs, when Odin pricked the shield-maid, Brynhild, with a sleep-thorn, and thus caused her to sleep in the shield-burg on Hindfell. Hither came Sigurd, attracted by an appearance of fire, and, finding the slumbering Brynhild, woke her by ripping open her armour with his sword Balmung.

<sup>1</sup> J. McCabe, "The Evolution of Civilization" (Watts; 1921), p. 28.

The magic sleep occurs in many folk-tales, but usually as an accessory incident only. It is induced in one of two ways, although in some there is no mention made of the means. Thus, in a Tuscan vampire story a couple of witches throw a young man into deep sleep, while they suck his blood to give themselves invisibility. This sleep is a not uncommon accompaniment to the doings of vampires, and may have arisen in the gentle whirring of the wings of the vampire-bat, which is said to have a somnolent effect upon its victims. The stories in which the method of sleep-induction is mentioned fall into two classes: those in which a magic formula or charm is used, and those in which mechanical means are employed.

A charm is used in some stories belonging to the Cinderella cycle. Thus, in a Gaelic version<sup>1</sup> the heroine is fed by a sheep, who is her mother.<sup>2</sup> The step-sister is sent to spy, but is put to sleep by the sheep, who charms her with:—

Shut one eye, shut two eyes,  
Shut your eyes in deep sleep.

This is successful on two occasions, but on the third the sheep forgets to say "two eyes," and one eye consequently remains open to spy. In variants from Russian, Scandinavian, and German sources<sup>3</sup> the step-sister has three eyes, and one spies while the other two sleep.

The margin between sleep-charms in fairy-tale and the folk-lullabies sung by mothers to their children seems to be a narrow one, as may be gathered from the section dealing with the latter in Countess Martinengo-Cesaresco's "Essays in the Study of Folk-Songs." Possibly the connection is in reality a close one, and it is within the bounds of possibility that the idea of a sleep-charm may have arisen from hearing the primitive mother crooning her infant to slumber.

<sup>1</sup> M. R. Cox, "Cinderella," p. 534.

<sup>2</sup> Cinderella's mother is not always a cow, as will be seen later.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

The mechanical means for inducing magic sleep are:—

1. Taking the head on the lap and combing the hair—a method not unknown in modern times. This occurs in Gaelic, Norse, Russian, and Lettish variants of Cinderella; but in these the step-sister has a third eye in the back of her head, which spies while the other two are closed. In some versions she merely simulates sleep.

2. A ring placed on the finger, as in "The World's Beauty," an Albanian tale.

3. A magic rod placed near the head causes sleep, or death, in some Eastern tales,<sup>1</sup> restoration occurring when another rod is placed at the feet.

4. A spindle, as in "Briar Rose."

5. A "sleep-thorn," as in the story of Brynhild already referred to.

6. A "hand of glory," as described in Barham's Ingoldsby Legend of that title. This gruesome object was the hand from a gibbeted corpse, the fingers of which were either anointed with grease droppings from the gibbet, or tipped each with a "lock of the dead man's hair" and lighted. Hartland<sup>2</sup> tells an English story of a beggar who spent the night at an inn. When all were a-bed the cook saw him produce a hand and light it; whereupon those already sleeping fell under the charm. While the beggar robbed his fellow guests the cook threw milk over the hand and extinguished it, so that every one awoke and the thief was taken *in flagrante delicto*.

The practices of wizards and sorcerers among modern savages, as Red Indians and Negroes, show that they are well acquainted with methods of inducing hypnotic sleep; and medieval literature is full of incidents pointing to the same conclusion with regard to those persecuted as witches. It is quite possible, therefore, that the magic-sleep incident is largely derived from the primitive practice of hypnosis.

<sup>1</sup> Day, *l.c.*, p. 77.

<sup>2</sup> "English Fairy-Tales," p. 198.

## CHAPTER IV

### PRIMITIVE BELIEFS OCCURRING IN FAIRY- TALE—(continued)

"A fool there was, and he made his prayer  
(Even as you and I !)

To a rag and a bone and a hank of hair."

—RUDYARD KIPLING.

#### § 1. *Fetishism*

WE have seen in the last Chapter how Animism was the foundation upon which developed the complicated system known as Totemism ; we have now to examine another of its results—that of *Fetishism*<sup>1</sup>—as briefly as its extent will allow.

Since any inanimate object could become the habitation of a spirit, and as the spirits of the dead could leave the body, return to it, or enter any animal, plant, stone, or other material object, these latter came to be regarded as something to be venerated, and to which offerings could profitably be made. When animate objects, as animals and plants, were concerned, the idea would develop along the line of Totemism, but in the case of inanimate objects the development would tend more towards the fetish or charm. In connection with this it may be mentioned that the Samoans<sup>2</sup> mention a time when all material things could speak, showing the incapability of the animistic savage to distinguish the animate from the inanimate.

<sup>1</sup> The term "fetish" is derived from the word *feitiço*, which the Portuguese used centuries ago for the objects revered by the negroes. *Feitiço* is itself derived from the Latin *facticius*, from *facere*, to do, which shows the original conception of the root of the word (A. C. Haddon, "Magic and Fetishism" (1910), p. 66).

<sup>2</sup> J. Batchelor, "The Ainus and their Folklore" (1901), p. 456.

Like all conceptions based upon Animism, Fetishism was a universal superstition, and it flourishes among savage tribes to-day. It would therefore be very remarkable if it were not found to be amply reflected in fairy-tale.

Fetishism has been somewhat loosely defined as "the worship of inanimate objects." It requires attention in some detail because a great deal of misconception as to the exact interpretation of Fetishism has crept into many works upon the subject, and it is important to quote the remarks of Haddon<sup>1</sup> in order that the reader may obtain a clear idea of its true significance. "All cases of Fetishism," he says, "when examined, show that the worship is paid to an intangible power or spirit incorporated in some visible form, and that the fetish is merely the link between the worshipper and the object of his worship. Any definition therefore which takes no account of the spiritual force behind the material object is seen to be incomplete and superficial, as it ignores the essential conception of the worship." It is a weakness inherent in man, both primitive and civilized, that he finds a difficulty in worshipping an abstract concept, but must have something material, something which appeals to his senses—which can be seen and felt—as a sort of working basis for his veneration. Therefore was evolved Fetishism, and from it developed the reverence for relics and idols, the images of gods being nothing more nor less than superior fetishes.

It is necessary to note in what form fetishes occur. According to Haddon,<sup>2</sup> a fetish may be any object whatsoever which attracts attention by its appearance or behaviour, or because it is revealed by a dream. It may consist of a symbolic charm with sympathetic properties; thus a part of a heart will confer courage, or part of an eye influence. Or it may consist of a sign or token representing an ideal notion or being, and in this connec-

<sup>1</sup> *l.c.*, p. 70,

<sup>2</sup> *l.c.*, p. 72.

tion the line between a fetish and an idol becomes very uncertain. "The distinction lies in the attitude of mind in which the object is worshipped, and no objective differentiation is possible, for the object will be a fetish to one worshipper and a pure symbol of a spirit to another."

A fetish is credited with mysterious powers owing to its being the habitation, temporary or permanent, of a spiritual being; which shows how closely allied are Fetishism and Animism. Sometimes it is merely the vehicle or means by which the spirit communicates with its worshippers—another indication of the merging of the fetish into the idol. When, however, the fetish is regarded as an instrument by which the spirit acts, it descends to a condition which is dissociated from religious significance and becomes a mere charm or amulet: this is the lowest and most universal form of Fetishism. Put more simply, in its earliest form a fetish is an object controlled by a spirit; in its intermediate form the spirit is not indwelling, but can be summoned by its means, as in the case of Aladdin's lamp; while in its later, degraded form the object has powers in itself apart from any controlling spirit.

When regarded as the habitation of a spirit the fetish possesses personality and will, and may act by the force of its own spirit or by that of a foreign spirit which enters or acts upon it from without. Here the fetish "is something more than mere Animism." Haddon considers that ancestor-worship and Fetishism may be intimately related, and points out that the Melanesians believe that the souls of the dead act through their bones, while the independent spirits choose stones as their mediums. One of the fundamental conceptions of the West African fetish is that the spirit and the material object can be dissociated, so that the broken cooking-pot has lost its spirit, or when the spirit is "dead" the fetish has lost its value.

Finally, the fetish is talked to, and receives worship, prayer, and sacrifice, or is ill treated if it does not do what is asked or expected of it. The savage will hide his fetish when he contemplates doing something of which he thinks it will be ashamed.

In the light of these brief explanatory remarks we can now turn to the incidents in fairy-tale which indicate the influence of Fetishism. A frequent incident is the appearance of animated puppets. The story of Pygmalion and Galatea, and that of the doll in "Tales of Hoffmann," suggest a fetish origin. Often the hero or heroine is impersonated by a puppet, and when the fairies carry off women they leave wooden blocks in place of them. These recall the clay images used to work magic, and the *Ushabti* figures buried by the Egyptians to labour for the mummy in the other world. Possibly the guardian puppets of fairy-tale are derived from these, for, since a spirit is supposed to be able to live in any object, personal guardian fetishes are found everywhere among primitive peoples. "Actual beliefs like these show that the talking and acting puppets and other objects are not the mere products of the imagination, but the reflection of the ideas which governed the minds of the people from whom these tales arose."<sup>1</sup>

The more degraded form of Fetishism, in which the object is considered to possess its own powers apart from any controlling spirit, figures in the amulets and charms which occur so frequently in fairy-tales. They are especially common in the "Arabian Nights' Entertainments." Aladdin's lamp, however, belongs to the intermediate form; but many stories, of Asiatic and European origin, belonging to the Aladdin cycle, illustrate both forms. So enduring is superstition in the human mind, even when the beliefs which engendered it have become forgotten, that people who should, by birth and education, know better still buy eagerly "mascot" fetishes

<sup>1</sup> Macculloch, *l.c.*, p. 201.



to "bring them luck," or to safeguard their motor-cars and aeroplanes from accident. Thus do civilization and superstition run hand-in-hand—brethren, like Valentine and Orson.

The magic swords and weapons—Arthur's Excalibur, Siegfried's Balmung, and Odin's spear Gungnir—which abound in legend and folk-tale, are also derived from Fetishism, as are the armed men who sprang from the dragon's teeth sown by Jason. The description given by Gibbon<sup>1</sup> of the scimitar worshipped by the Huns obviously reflects Fetishism. The magic weapons and armour of folk-tale were believed to be forged by black dwarfs who dwelt underground, and who are the lineal descendants of Tubal-Cain, Vulcan, the Scandinavian Loki, and the Circassian Tleps. The magic wands of fairy-tale—which still survive with the somewhat prosaic modern conjurer—are derived, like the magic swords, from Fetishism. They are very common in Eastern fairy-tales, as exemplified by the rods or wands of the Rakshasas (see p. 69). The magic wand is brother to the "pointing sticks," made from plants or bones, used by the Australian Blackfellows, and the "diviner's rod," the true nature of which has been so admirably explained by Dr. Millais Culpin.<sup>2</sup>

### § 2. *The Renewal of Life*

To the primitive mind there is no more difficult problem than death. To the savage sleep, trance, and death are so nearly indistinguishable that the last appears merely as a prolonged form of the first and second. Indeed, man in his most civilized state has not yet shaken himself free of his primitive difficulties, and we continue to speak in our burial service of the "sure and certain hope" of resurrection, which to many conveys the idea of a resurrection in bodily form. Indeed, the resur-

<sup>1</sup> "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," Everyman Edition, vol. iii, p. 347.    <sup>2</sup> "Spiritualism and the New Psychology" (1920), p. 34.

rection of the body is an article of the Christian creed. This, how ever the ecclesiastic specialist may endeavour to explain it, is a survival of primitive conceptions concerning death.

To the savage death is never a natural condition, but was introduced into the world by accident, and is usually encompassed by magic or witchcraft. It is the chief characteristic of man to be always asking questions, and with the dawn of his intelligence he began to seek explanations to account for the natural phenomena around him. His first problem was that of his creation; his second concerned the appearance in the world of death<sup>1</sup>:—

What, without asking, hither hurried *whence*?  
And, without asking, *whither* hurried hence!

He satisfied his speculation by the invention of legends, all of which bear a close resemblance one to the other. In some, as in the story in Genesis of his fall, it was suggested that the first man and woman were created immortal, but that they lost the gift of immortality because they disobeyed the god. In others their loss was brought about by the jealousy or stupidity of some animal.

But, how ever death came into the world, it was not a natural condition, and with the difficulty of distinguishing between unconsciousness and death came the conviction that, somehow or other, life could be renewed. If the phenomena of unconsciousness from concussion of the brain be considered, in which, for a period varying from minutes to days, the subject lies bereft of movement and sensation, with the breathing and the heart's action scarcely perceptible, and either sinks into death or recovers, the difficulty of primitive man can easily be realized. Moreover, as I pointed out in the last Chapter (p. 69), primitive man was and is acquainted with the

<sup>1</sup> "The Story of the Bible," p. 45.

trance arising from exhaustion, famine, or severe hæmorrhage, and the hypnotic sleep self-induced or brought about by others.

These primitive difficulties concerning death are reflected in our fairy-tales, and there are three types of story in which the renewal of life is to be found as an incident. In the first, the dead or apparently dead are restored to life; in the second, those who have been dismembered are made whole and alive again; and in the third, which reflects the doctrine of metempsychosis, the dead live on in other forms. These must be considered in some detail.

*Type 1. The dead or apparently dead are restored to life.* The means of restoration are usually by the water of life, by fire, by being bitten by ants, by means of plants, and by magic.

Water, as I have already pointed out, must have appealed to the primitive mind by its restlessness, power, cleansing properties, and necessity to man. It is not surprising, therefore, to find it endowed in folklore all over the world with life-giving properties. Stories in which the water of life occurs as a prominent incident are numerous. One of the best examples is that contained in the Grimm collection, which belongs to the Youngest Son cycle. In this story a king falls ill, and can be restored to health and life only by the water of life. His three sons set out in turn to find it, and meet a dwarf. The first and second sons are rude to him, and the rocks close around them and they become spell-bound. The youngest son, however, replies civilly to the dwarf's inquiries, and the latter gives him instructions, together with a magic iron wand and two loaves of bread. With these he reaches an enchanted castle, the doors of which fly open when struck with the wand, revealing a brace of lions which are appeased by the loaves of bread. The prince, after certain adventures in the castle by which he obtains enchanted rings and a

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magic sword and sets free a princess, who is alike enchanting and enchanted, obtains the water of life. On his return he intercedes with the dwarf for his brothers, who are thus released from the spell which binds them. The ungrateful brothers rob him of the precious elixir, and with it restore the king to health; but, after many adversities, the youngest son returns to explain matters, is married to the princess, and "lives happily ever after."

In some legends fire is the means employed, in others the bite of ants effects the restoration. Both forms suggest strongly the inability of primitive man to distinguish between death and insensibility.

Healing plants are frequent in folklore, and a tree of life or immortality occurs in Semitic, Norse, Malaysian, Chinese, and Polynesian mythologies. Healing herbs figure in many tales, and the monkey-god Hanuman, in the *Ramayana*,<sup>1</sup> restores his subjects by their means. The belief ranges from such herbs as the "medicine of life," which the Malagasy<sup>2</sup> consider to possess such power as to be capable of restoring life to the dead, to the Red Indian herb, which remedies all diseases and gives longevity. "The powers of such herbs can be easily traced in an ascending scale, from the known and usual to the unknown and unusual and mystical."<sup>3</sup> These superstitions arise out of the ordinary medicinal uses of plants, assisted by tree-worship, and augmented by the power of imagination. They survive in the absurd avidity with which ignorant moderns purchase quack remedies proclaimed to be founded upon some secret known only to the vendor, and professing to cure everything under the sun.

Magic methods of restoring life come next: charms, wands, the power of gods, devils, and Christian saints. The numerous folk-tales of this nature all exemplify the

<sup>1</sup> Wheeler, "History of India," vol. ii, p. 368.

<sup>2</sup> Ellis, "History of Madagascar," vol. i, p. 473.

<sup>3</sup> Macculloch, *l.c.*, p. 88.

primitive difficulties of which I have spoken. The magician can capture a man's soul and restore it. Possibly either belief is due to the knowledge and practice of suggestion. To such ideas belong the stories of Briar Rose and Brynhild.

In the primitive rites of initiation which the savage has to undergo at puberty the commonest form is the pretence of killing the initiate and bringing him to life again. "Such rites become intelligible if we suppose that their substance consists in extracting the youth's soul in order to transfer it to the totem."<sup>1</sup> Frazer suggests that "the primitive belief in the possibility of such an exchange of souls comes clearly out in the story of the Basque hunter who affirmed that he had been killed by a bear, but the bear had, after killing him, breathed its own soul into him, so that the bear's body was now dead, but he himself was the bear, being animated by the bear's soul."<sup>2</sup> Such rites are practised among the Australians, who make use of the "bull-roarer," a flat piece of wood with serrated edges, which gives out a loud humming sound when swung at the end of a string during the ceremony. The sound is believed to be the noise made by the wizards in swallowing the boys and bringing them up again as men. In some initiatory rites there is a sort of symbolic burial and resurrection—a form practised by the Australians, Fijians, Congo tribes, American Indians, and others. Similar symbolism was used in the ancient Mexican, Mithraic, Eleusinian, and Bacchic mysteries. This idea of "re-birth" has survived in Christian practices.

*Type 2. The dismembered are made whole and live again.* Many of the stories in which this type of life-renewal occurs may be referred to the Egyptian myth of Osiris, of which the following is a brief outline. Osiris, a wise and good king, had an evil brother, Set. The

<sup>1</sup> Sir James Frazer, "The Golden Bough," 2nd edn. (1900), vol. iii, p. 422.

<sup>2</sup> T. Benfey, "Pantschatantra," vol. i, p. 128 sq.

latter, by artifice, imprisoned him in a coffer, which was cast into the Nile. Isis, the wife of Osiris, wandered in search of her husband's body, and in the swamps of the Delta gave birth to Horus. The coffer floated to Byblus, and Isis heard that a beautiful tree had grown up on the spot, enclosing it within its trunk. This tree had been cut down to form a pillar in the king's palace. Isis reached the palace, gained admission, and, by disclosing her identity, obtained possession of the pillar. This she opened, then removed the coffer and placed it in a boat. While visiting her son Horus, Set found the coffer, and cut the body of Osiris into fourteen pieces. The fragments were recovered by Isis, who buried each where she found it. Finally they were brought together; and, by fanning them with her wings to the accompaniment of magic words, Isis restored Osiris to life and he became king of the underworld.

Closely allied myths are those of Dionysus, torn limb from limb by the Titans and restored by his mother Demeter, and of Adonis; and they are all closely resembled by numerous folk-tales from different quarters of the world, from Roumania to America, and from Madagascar to Australia. In the Russian story of Koshchei the Deathless (to be mentioned later in discussing the Separable Soul) the hero Morevna was cut into bits by Koshchei, put in a barrel, and thrown into the sea. His brothers-in-law, the eagle, the falcon, and the raven, sought and found the barrel, obtained the water of life and death, and with it restored him to life.

In some forms of this type the restoration is brought about by magic. Thus in the classical Greek story Medea cast Æson, the father of Jason, into a deep sleep, brewed a magic liquor, cut his throat, poured the mixture into the wound, and so restored him to life and youth. The tale of the Field of Bones,<sup>1</sup> in which the use of

<sup>1</sup> Day, *l.c.*, p. 251.

charms said over the bones left by cannibal rakshasas restores life to a king and all his courtiers and subjects, is an example from India. This significance of bones will be noted shortly.

In later times of Christian influence the restoration of the dismembered is accomplished by a saint. The most remarkable of this group of stories is the Russian legend of St. Nicholas,<sup>1</sup> which tells how this holy man came, accompanied by a greedy rascal of a priest, to a country where the king's daughter was bewitched, a reward being proclaimed to any one who could effect her cure. St. Nicholas cut her in pieces, washed them in a tub, breathed on them till they adhered, and, by a further expenditure of his holy breath, made her live. This happened on two other occasions, and then the priest, thinking to get the reward for himself, tried the experiment. He failed, and was about to be hanged as a murderer when the saint turned up and saved him by restoring the princess to life. Variants of the story are found in Brittany, Germany, Italy, Norway, and other localities, and in some of these the saint has his place taken by God or Christ. In discussing these remarkable stories Macculloch<sup>2</sup> suggests that "it is possible that these tales were first told of pagan divinities or heroes. Indeed, it is now proved<sup>3</sup> that St. Nicholas was originally a pagan divinity, possibly Artemis, or if he actually existed was given many of this divinity's attributes." In connection with the incident of the renewal of life, the reader is reminded how commonly the miracle of the raising of the dead occurs in Christian, Mohammedan, and Buddhist mythology.

Dismemberment in which some important part of the body is lost occurs in many tales. Usually the hero has to perform certain tasks, in which he is helped by his

<sup>1</sup> W. R. S. Ralston, *l.c.*, p. 351.

<sup>2</sup> *l.c.*, p. 96.

<sup>3</sup> By Prof. Anichkof, "St. Nicholas and Artemis," "Folklore," vol. v, p. 108.

oppressor's daughter—an assistance which involves her being cut up and restored. A Basque story told by Webster<sup>1</sup> may be cited as an example. The hero is ordered to recover a ring from the river. The girl tells him to cut her in pieces and throw them into the water. He does so, and she comes up with the ring. But part of her finger sticks to a nail in the hero's shoe, and she reappears *minus* the joint. Later he has to identify her from among her sisters, and does so by the deformity (see reference to primitive marriage customs, p. 34).

It was a universal primitive belief that, so long as the body or some part of it existed, renewal of life was possible. Hence the practice of embalming, mummification, or some other method of preservation. The bones especially appear to have been considered as highly important, probably because more durable. Even in palæolithic times some such preservation was practised, and bones of the stone age have been found coloured with a red pigment. Such customs, again, suggest the haziness of the savage mind in regard to death and conditions apparently akin, such as sleep. The belief in vampires also shows both this uncertainty and the conception that, so long as any part remained, new life was possible. When a vampire was discovered and destroyed, nothing must be left, lest the monster should again prey upon the living.<sup>2</sup> The idea that body and soul are intimately connected has not yet died out, but remains in that article of the Christian faith which asserts belief in "the resurrection of the *body*." The whole paraphernalia of what may be termed the ghost cult is similarly suggestive—viz., that the soul can reanimate the body so long as any part of it remains intact, just as the Ainos believe the ghost to be active until the body is completely decomposed. The belief is the foundation of all folk-tales concerning the dead, of the Dead

<sup>1</sup> *I.c.*, p. 123.

<sup>2</sup> This superstition was actually put into practice in a Bosnian village in April, 1923, as reported in the "Daily Mail" of May 30 of that year.



Rider ballad cycle, in which a dead man calls some dearly loved one to ride with him on horseback, unaware that he is dead, and who escapes from his grave only with much difficulty ; of those Cinderella and Youngest Son stories in which the deceased parent assists, from the grave, the living hero or heroine ; and probably also of the majority of modern ghost tales.

The English tale of Binnorie<sup>1</sup> may be cited here as an illustration of this superstition, of which Teeny-Tiny (see Chapter XI) is another example. Two king's daughters lived near the mill-dams of Binnorie. Sir William wooed the elder, but jilted her for the younger. The former threw her rival into the mill-stream, where she was drowned. She was taken from the water by the miller, and as she lay in her beauty a famous harper saw her and could never forget her face. He returned to Binnorie and fashioned a harp out of her breastbone and hair. One night at the castle the harper sang to the king, queen, sister, and Sir William in the presence of the whole court. He then placed the harp upon a stone, where presently it sang by itself :—

O yonder sits my father, the king,  
 Binnorie, O Binnorie ;  
 And yonder sits my mother, the queen,  
 By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie.  
 And yonder stands my brother Hugh,  
 Binnorie, O Binnorie ;  
 And by him my William, false and true,  
 By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie.

Then the harper related what had happened, and the harp began to sing again :—

And there sits my sister, who drownéd me  
 By the bonnie mill-dams o' Binnorie,  
 when it snapped, broke, and never sang more.

*Type 3. The dead live on in other forms.* This type is to be found in many stories of the Cinderella, Separable Soul, and other cycles. I have already alluded, and shall

<sup>1</sup> Jacobs, *l.c.*, p. 44.

again have to refer, to the transformation of the mother in some of the Cinderella variants into a cow or sheep; and it has been mentioned that in the primitive form of the tale the mother was actually the animal. It is from the bones that the help usually comes—the food, the ball-dress, etc.; the dead parent having her place taken in later versions by the fairy godmother. In other forms of story the dead one lives on in a tree which springs from the grave, as in that of *The Juniper Tree* (p. 47). In one group of tales a magic pipe figures, the instrument being cut from a tree growing from the grave of a murdered person and telling the fatal secret. It is significant that in some versions the pipe is made from a bone of the victim found protruding from the grave. These stories are widespread.

The tree idea is very old, as will be seen when the Egyptian tale of *The Two Brothers* is considered in connection with the *Separable Soul*. Here, from two drops of the blood of the slain bull (into which the brother was transformed), spring two trees containing the brother's soul. This transformation from blood occurs in tales from Russia, Hungary, France, Italy, and other countries. The idea of the dead continuing in the form of a tree is the motive in many folk-ballads, as of the slain lovers from whom grew a rose and a briar which twined together in a true-lover's knot. Shakespeare makes use of it in regard to Ophelia:—

Lay her i' the earth ;  
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh  
May violets spring.

Reincarnation in the form of an animal also reflects the doctrine of transmigration held in the Buddhist, Hindu, and other Eastern religions, as well as by Zulus, Maoris, Eskimo, Australian, and other primitive peoples.

We have, therefore, in these types of fairy-tale the reflection, in an exaggerated form perhaps, of primitive conceptions concerning death.

§ 3. *Magic and Sorcery*

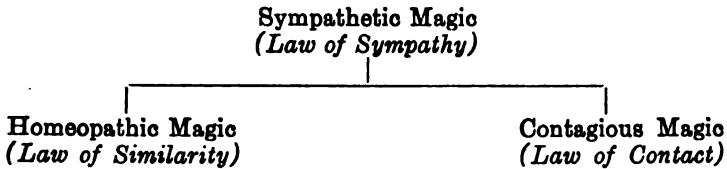
The subject of magic and sorcery is a very large one, and can be treated here only by touching briefly upon its most salient points. There is scarcely a fairy-tale to be found which does not contain some item of wizardry and magic; and the prominent part which they play in these primitive romances is not the result, as I have heard some people suggest, of that universal belief in witchcraft which prevailed during the Middle Ages and even later, but is traceable to a much more remote period. It points to that far-off time when, as among modern savage races, the wise-woman and the medicine-man, shaman, or witch-doctor vied with the chief or king himself for first place in the social system. The naïvete with which incidents of magic and sorcery are told in fairy-tale points to an age when they were accepted rather as ordinary events of daily life than as matters for special wonder.

As I have stated elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> primitive man had no knowledge, such as is possessed by his descendants, of the real causes underlying the workings of nature. He considered that everything going on around him was the work of spirits, whose nature was similar to his own. It was this confusion between the spirit or animistic idea and the ordinary operations of nature which led to the system of magic.

The ideas upon which magic was built up were two: first, that *like produces like*—i.e., that an effect resembles its cause; second, that things which have once been in *contact* continue to act upon each other after that contact is broken. The two together are comprised in the term *sympathetic magic*, while separately they are spoken of as *homeopathic*, *mimetic* or *imitative*, and *contagious* or *contact magic* respectively. Frazer, in an admirable brief

<sup>1</sup> "The Story of the Bible," p. 36.

account of the subject,<sup>1</sup> thus tabulates them "according to the laws of thought which underlie them" :—



It would occupy too much space to enter deeply into the two forms of magic, and a couple of illustrative if well-worn examples must suffice. The most familiar example of homeopathic magic is the belief, universal in medieval times, and still surviving among ignorant peasants in outlying districts of the continent and in the Highlands of Scotland to this day,<sup>2</sup> that an enemy may be injured or destroyed by similarly injuring or destroying a figure of clay or wax made in his likeness. The best example of contagious magic is the savage belief that, provided the medicine-man can obtain some object which a person has worn, or some part of his body, such as the blood, saliva, hair, or nail-parings, he can affect that person by injuring or destroying it. Even the earth from his footprint will suffice. To the domain of contagious magic belongs also the belief that a man's name is an essential part of himself. This superstition has been very ably and amply discussed by Clodd,<sup>3</sup> and will be again alluded to when discussing the question of tabu and the Rumpelstiltskin cycle of stories.

The power which possession of some part of a person gives over its original owner is shown in the belief that, by burning the part obtained, his spirit can be called up and compelled to do whatever is required of it. Readers of the "Ingoldsby Legends" will remember how this idea is made use of in "A Singular Passage in the Life

<sup>1</sup> "The Magical Origin of Kings" (1920), p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> Frazer, "The Golden Bough," vol. i, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> E. Clodd, "Magic in Names" (1920).

of the late Henry Harris, D.D." This belief is reflected in many fairy-tales in which friendly animals give the hero some of their hairs, scales, or feathers, which, when burned, will call them to his aid. Such a proceeding on the part of an animal shows how implicit is its trust, since such a gift places it entirely in the power of the recipient. Probably the exchange by lovers of locks of hair or fragments of raiment symbolized originally their mutual faith. The whole idea of contagious magic makes the part to resemble the whole in every way, so that whatever is done to it will similarly affect the body from which it was taken. In this connection no doubt arose the conception of a blood relationship formed either by the mingling of the blood of two persons or by the partaking together of a common meal, whereby the two participants became "blood brothers." The same idea is embodied in religious sacraments. A like end could be accomplished also by an exchange of names, as in the famous case of Captain Cook and Oree. This blood-mingling, common meal, or name exchange symbolized a union of a very sacred kind, forming a blood relationship, a brotherhood, and formal adoption into a tribe or family. The modern wedding breakfast and the bride-cake, with the adoption by the bride of her husband's name, indicate a survival of the idea.

The assignment to parts of the body of the properties and powers of the whole is accountable for the numerous incidents in folk-tale whereby blood or spittle is made to speak, or to animate some material object. Thus, in an Esthonian story<sup>1</sup> an image of clay is made to personate a girl, and comes to life when sprinkled with her blood. Drops of blood speak in some folk-tales, as in the Norse story of the Mastermaid and the German "Sweetheart Roland"; and the belief finds an echo in Genesis, iv, 10, when God says to Cain: "What hast thou done? the

<sup>1</sup> W. F. Kirby, *l.c.*, vol. i, p. 246.

voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." In many tales from Russia, Zululand, the Scottish Highlands, Germany, and the Basque country, saliva is endowed with speech. Thus, in one version of *Hansel and Grethel*, the latter, having set free the former, spits upon the floor before they take to flight. When the witch asks, "Will the water soon be ready?" the spittle replies from its position beside the hearth, "I am just fetching it!" In the Polish tale of *Prince Unexpected* the heroine spits before she escapes with the hero, and the saliva not only replies for her to all questions, but laughs at the ogre when he finds how he has been outwitted.

Contagious magic is similarly responsible for many other incidents in fairy-tale, as the obstacles thrown down to prevent pursuit and the magic mirrors which speak, or in which the future is foretold, or what is happening elsewhere is revealed. In the former, to which allusion has been made in the last Chapter (p. 62), a comb cast behind becomes a hedge or a forest, and a mirror becomes a vast lake. The magic speaking-mirror incident is well known in Grimm's story of "*Snow-White*." Here the queen-stepmother gazes at herself in the glass and asks it:

Tell me glass, tell me true!  
Of all the ladies in the land,  
Who is fairest? tell me, who?

The mirror had always replied:

Thou, queen, art the fairest in all the land.

But when *Snow-White* had grown into a beautiful maiden it answers, being proverbially a truth-teller:

Thou, queen, art fair and beauteous to see,  
But *Snow-White* is lovelier far than thee.

This story has many variants, African, Hungarian, Celtic, and others. Whether the idea can be truly connected with contagious magic is doubtful, and Macculloch<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *l.c.*, p. 34.

places it in what he calls "the X region." But, since a reflection, like the shadow, is held by the primitive mind to be a part of oneself, it is possible that contact magic may be at the root of the incident.

The magic glass which reveals the future or mirrors distant passing events has its foundation in "crystal gazing," or "scrying." This practice is very ancient and universal, was known to the Egyptians, Assyrians, Greeks, Romans, and other nations of antiquity, and is practised by numerous primitive races to-day as well as by Bond Street charlatans. An excellent account of the subject will be found in Clodd's "The Question."<sup>1</sup> Scrying is closely related to suggestion and the trance state. Speaking personally, I have never yet met with any account of modern crystal-gazing that could stand the test of investigation.<sup>2</sup> Visions, when seen, are but the suggestions of what is hidden in the subconscious, the result of forgotten past impressions. With a practice, however, of such antiquity it was inevitable that scrying, as Macculloch remarks,<sup>3</sup> "would find some place in folk-tale, and we are only surprised that it does not occur oftener. The mirror which speaks is, of course, nothing but the story-teller's conception of the hallucinatory crystal or mirror."

Lastly, there are such magic incidents in fairy-tales as the Wishing Table, the Miraculous Banquet, the Gold-producing Animal, the Inexhaustible Purse, the Shoes of Swiftmess, the Cloak or Cap of Invisibility, and Transportation by Magic. These are not altogether to be explained by reference to any system of magic, although some possibly originated in the homeopathic form.

<sup>1</sup> London (1917), p. 154.

<sup>2</sup> In regard to telepathy, so-called, I endeavour to keep an open mind. Although it is so shrouded in a mass of credulity and imposture, it is possible that future research in brain physiology may show the existence of something akin to the Herzian waves. One hesitates to dismiss such a possibility in the face of the known electrical reactions of nervous matter.

<sup>3</sup> *l.c.*, p. 37.

Grimm's story of the Wishing Table has English, Italian, Russian, Deccan, Norse, Polish, Norwegian, Austrian, and other variants. In the English version<sup>1</sup> Jack is given a donkey which drops silver or gold. The animal is stolen by an innkeeper, who substitutes for it an ordinary ass. Then Jack is given a table which provides a banquet when desired, and this is stolen in its turn. Finally he receives a cudgel which beats malefactors of its own accord, and by its means the rascally innkeeper is hoist by his own petard and compelled to restore the stolen articles. To the English child the most familiar gold-producing animal is the famous goose with the golden eggs.

It is possible that in these stories are reflected the ideas of homeopathic magic, in which the imitation of the effect is considered as able to produce the effect itself. Thus savages go through a mimic chase in order to ensure good hunting; while the Australians, when they wish to increase the supply of their insect food, imitate the witchetty-grub emerging from the chrysalis. It may be supposed, therefore, that the magic tables, inexhaustible purses, and the like, are "the imaginative reproductions of ceremonies gone through for the purpose of increasing food or wealth, plus the conceptions of sympathetic magic. Some such reasoning lies behind these magical processes of our tales, though the connection of the objects with those actual ceremonies is not easy to trace step by step."<sup>2</sup>

It must be borne in mind that, to the savage, the difference between what does happen, what can happen, and what *might* happen is very indefinite, and that the wish is easily father to the thought. Between desires for invisibility or longings for swiftness and their fulfilment the transition is simple to the primitive mind. It is probably to this that we owe the caps and cloaks of

<sup>1</sup> W. Henderson, "Folklore of Northern Counties of England" (1879), p. 327.

<sup>2</sup> Macculloch, *l.c.*, p. 219.



invisibility and the shoes of swiftness, possibly coupled with the experience gained by the use of disguises and the greater ease in travelling obtained from protective foot coverings.

Lastly, as regards the magic carpets and other means of magic transportation so familiar in fairy-tale, any reference to the supposed powers of witches in this respect will supply an explanation. The possibility of what Spiritualists call "levitation" has been an article of devout belief from very early times, to be realized in this twentieth century by the invention of the aeroplane. "Stories of levitation," says Clodd,<sup>1</sup> "specially gather round St. Philip Neri, St. Dunstan, St. Ignatius Loyola, St. Theresa, and many others whose names are written in the 'Acta Sanctorum.' Similar legends come from the East, adding to the list Gautama the Buddha and his disciples, and also Brahmins, who levitated so as to perform more completely the solar rites. Famous and nearer to our time is the levitation of the Franciscan monk, St. Joseph of Copertino, who lived in the seventeenth century. He was often raised in the air, remaining there till called back by the general of his order. Despite old age, his eagerness to soar caused him to take a short flight on the day before he died."

The longing to emulate the birds and butterflies has caused the saint to pray and fast, and the man of science to invent balloons and aeroplanes. With so universal and ancient a desire, it would have been remarkable had flights through the air been absent from fairy-tale.

#### § 4. *Tabu*

Closely connected with magic is another form of primitive practice—viz., *Tabu*. The word "tabu" is Polynesian, and somewhat difficult to define in words, although in the English Dictionary it is described as

<sup>1</sup> "The Question," p. 92.

meaning "a political prohibition and religious interdict among the inhabitants of the islands of the Pacific." According to Tregear,<sup>1</sup> "The true inwardness of the word *tabu* is that it infers the setting apart of certain persons or things on account of their having become possessed or infected by the presence of supernatural beings, particularly of the ancestral spirits who were guardian spirits of the tribe." Frazer<sup>2</sup> has put the whole meaning of *tabu* (or *taboo*) in a nutshell, and shown, in the following passage, that it is neither more nor less than an extension of magic: "But the system of sympathetic magic is not merely composed of positive precepts; it comprises also a very large number of negative precepts—that is, prohibitions. It tells you not merely what to do, but also what to leave undone. *The positive precepts are charms; the negative precepts are taboos.*"<sup>3</sup> The whole doctrine of *taboo*, in fact, would seem to be only a special application of sympathetic magic, with its two great laws of similarity and contact. Though these laws are certainly not formulated in so many words by the savage, they are nevertheless implicitly believed by him to regulate the course of nature quite independently of human will. He thinks that if he acts in a certain way certain consequences will inevitably follow in virtue of one or other of these laws; and if the consequences of a particular act appear to him likely to prove disagreeable or dangerous, he is naturally careful not to act in that way, in order not to incur those consequences. In other words, he abstains from doing that which, in accordance with his mistaken notions of cause and effect, he falsely believes would injure him; in short, he subjects himself to a *taboo*. Thus *taboo* is only a negative application of practical magic.....Sorcery says, 'Act.' *Taboo* says, 'Abstain.'"

This explanation Frazer supports with numerous

<sup>1</sup> E. Tregear, "The Maori Race" (1904), p. 192.

<sup>2</sup> "The Magical Origin of Kings," p. 52.

<sup>3</sup> The italics are mine.

examples, of which the two following are simple instances. The Esquimaux boys of Baffin Land are forbidden to play at cat's cradle, lest their fingers might in later life become entangled in the harpoon-line ; while among the Huzuls of the Carpathian mountains the wife of a hunter must not spin while her husband is hunting, because, should she do so, the game will turn and wind like the spindle and the hunter will be unable to hit it. Both these tabus depend clearly on the law of similarity, which is the foundation of homeopathic magic.

Some writers have expressed surprise at the complexity of thought and reasoning displayed by primitive man. When, however, it is considered in the light of the foregoing remarks, and given the implicit belief in magic and the remarkable ramifications into which such blind faith may lead, there is no cause for wonder that primitive ideas and institutions should be so intricate. They are all founded upon the belief in magic, which dominates every moment of savage life, from the cradle to beyond the grave.

There are two groups of folk-tales in which the idea of tabu is a dominant incident. These are the Forbidden Chamber, or Bluebeard cycle, and the Cupid and Psyche cycle. In the former (which will be more specially dealt with in a subsequent Chapter) the main incident is the prohibition expressed to a woman, in some cases to a man, against opening the door of a certain chamber. The root of these stories lies in actual tabus of a religious nature, violation of which was punished by death. Examples of this kind of tabu are found in those placed by Jehovah upon the Ark of the Covenant and upon Lot's wife from looking behind her. These, with the tabus upon the temple of Jupiter Lycæus and Pandora's box, are but a few instances out of many to be found in the mythologies of all races. Sometimes religious tabus are of a sexual nature, and among many primitive peoples one sex is forbidden to witness the special rites of the other.

Hartland<sup>1</sup> has shown that it is to such a sexual tabu that we owe the story of Lady Godiva and Peeping Tom. The extraordinary persistence of primitive thought has carried the religious and sexual tabu idea down to a comparatively late period, as in the objection of witches to the presence of men at their Sabbath orgies.

In one group of stories the opening of a forbidden door sets free some monster, to the detriment (but sometimes to the advantage) of the opener. These incidents Macculloch<sup>2</sup> explains as "relics of earlier tales, in which it was shown that the owner of a fetish or a personal spirit incurred danger or loss if any one intruded on the place where it was supposed to reside."

The Bluebeard stories have not, at first sight, any religious significance, but this is to be accounted for by their being adaptations by the story-teller from already existing materials at a time when the original religious tabu had been forgotten.

In the Cupid and Psyche cycle of stories the main motive is loss of husband by wife or wife by husband, the disaster being due to some apparently irrational reason. The classical story is briefly as follows: The youngest of the three daughters of a king, Psyche became the object of Aphrodite's jealousy because of her remarkable beauty. The goddess ordered Cupid to inspire her with a passion for the most contemptible of all men, but he fell in love with her himself. Conveying her to a charming spot, Cupid, unseen and unknown, visited her nightly, leaving at the approach of dawn. But her jealous sisters convinced her that her mysterious lover was some hideous monster, and one night, while Cupid slept, Psyche approached him with a lamp, to find to her astonishment that he was the most beautiful of the gods. Trembling with emotion, she spilled a drop of hot oil on his shoulder, so that he awoke, and, after upbraiding her mistrust, fled. The unhappy

<sup>1</sup> "Science of Fairy-Tales," p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> *I.e.*, p. 320.

Psyche wandered from temple to temple until she reached the palace of Aphrodite. Here she was detained by the jealous goddess, treated as a slave, and made to perform the hardest and most humiliating labours. Cupid, however, still loved her in secret, and, remaining invisible, comforted and helped her. Thus aided by her lover, Psyche overcame the hatred of Aphrodite, and, becoming immortal, was united to him for ever.

This beautiful story, in which has been seen an allegory of the soul purified and exalted by love, is an old Greek *märchen* adopted by the Greek mythology, and has numerous parallels. The closest variants figure a mysterious bridegroom whose wife must lose him for ever if she sees him. Of course she does so, and is reunited to him after many trials and sorrows. The Swedish tale of Prince Hatt Under the Earth<sup>1</sup> is one of these. In others the husband is changed by enchantment into animal form, as in Beauty and the Beast, becoming man again at night, when his wife must not see him. Sometimes the wife knows of her husband's double form, but must not divulge it lest the spell can never be dissolved, while in other cases she must never ask him his name. The famous story of Lohengrin is the best known instance of this last form. In yet another series the bride, when she visits her relations (as in Beauty and the Beast), must not stay away beyond a certain stipulated time.

In one class of variants the rôle is changed, it being the husband who breaks the tabu by seeing his wife, revealing her secret, speaking her name, staying too long away, irritating her or asking her the reason for her actions, striking her, or touching her with iron. Some of these tabus are reminiscent of the stories told in the modern divorce court.

The prohibitions in all these stories are nothing other than the reflection of actual marriage tabus, many of

<sup>1</sup> B. Thorpe, "Yuletide Stories" (1853), p. 15.

which still exist in savage society. In some cases, as among the Iroquois, the husband visits his wife only at night—a custom which obtained among the early Romans until the first child was born. The custom, according to Kovavelsky,<sup>1</sup> is a survival of group marriage, when a wife was common to several brothers. The tabu on the husband's name is well known in Africa, while among other peoples—e.g., the Solomon Islanders—it is on that of the wife. The revealing by one of the other's secret exposes him to the dangers of magic if some enemy obtains it. The incident reflects the well-known custom among savages of avoiding relations by marriage from a belief that danger exists in not doing so. Often the names of such relations are tabu. This superstition specially affects mothers-in-law, and possibly survives in the well-worn jokes about them among our highly-civilized selves. The tabu on visiting relations has the same source, and is reflected in the staying too long away incident. The prohibition as to injury or striking is less easy to explain, but possibly refers to the danger which, among some savages, exists from retaliation. According to Tremearne,<sup>2</sup> in Bengal to-day a husband may have to execute a deed stipulating never to scold his wife, nor even disagree with her, the penalty in each case being a divorce. It must be remembered that the savage view of women is that they are always highly dangerous, and especially so at various critical periods in their lives. Probably many of the existing folk-tales which turn upon marriage or sexual tabus were originally told to emphasize the danger of breaking them, the tabu and the penalties for its transgression being used to point the moral and adorn the tale. The story, as has been the case in every age, was the jam that concealed the necessary powder.

To those ignorant of folklore the fatal consequences of

<sup>1</sup> "L'Anthropologie," vol. iv, p. 272.

<sup>2</sup> A. J. N. Tremearne, "The Tailed Head-Hunters of Nigeria" (1912), p. 236.

touching a wife with cold iron will seem particularly unreasonable, especially as the contact is in most folk-tale examples accidental. It has its origin, however, in a very universal superstition. Iron destroys the powers of fairies and elves in European folklore. No witch can step over cold iron. In the stories in which the incident occurs the wife is usually a fairy or a witch. The horseshoe on the stable-door keeps out witches, not from its shape or any other significance, but simply because it is iron; the gold, silver, or other material of which miniature horseshoe charms are made thus causes them to lose their real significance. The name of the metal alone is a potent charm against the genie of the East. In a word,

".....Iron—cold iron—is the master of them all!"

The superstitions concerning iron are due to the fact that it overcame the earlier ages of stone and bronze. The inferior peoples who used weapons of these materials and found them of no avail against those of iron looked upon the latter with awe. Moreover, the early difficulties of making weapons of iron and their consequent rarity and greater value must have added to this feeling. The introduction of iron was one of the great turning points in man's progress, and, as the dead users of stone axes and arrow-heads who lay in neolithic barrows and burial mounds became the fairies of later times, so iron had a potent power over them, and their implements, found on the moors or turned up by the plough, became to the peasants "fairy-darts" and "elf-stones." At the same time change cuts both ways, and, as with the flint knives used for the embalming incision of the Egyptians and the circumcision of the Hebrews, man's innate conservatism ordained that old ceremonies must be performed with the time-honoured implements. Hobley<sup>1</sup> states that all Bantu smiths possess magical powers, alleged to come from the iron they use.

<sup>1</sup> C. W. Hobley, "Bantu Beliefs and Magic" (1922), p. 169.

## CHAPTER V

### CINDERELLA AND THE OUTCAST CHILD

"And the Prince married her, and they were happy all their days."  
—RASHIN COATIE.

#### § 1. *Introductory*

I NOW turn from general considerations to the discussion of special stories and story cycles. The first I shall consider is the very popular tale of Cinderella and her little glass slipper, so frequently the subject of Christmas pantomime, in which it is often mangled almost beyond recognition.

It may disappoint some readers to find, as will be shown in the course of this Chapter, that the slipper which appeals so much to the childish imagination is really of very little importance in the story. Balzac, in his "Catherine de Medicis,"<sup>1</sup> has made the following remark: "In hundreds of editions of Perrault's fairy-tales Cinderella's famous slipper, probably of fur, *menu vair*"—what is called miniver—"has become a glass slipper, *pantoufle de verre*. Not long since a distinguished French poet was obliged to restore and explain the original spelling of this word for the edification of his brethren of the press when giving an account of the 'Cenerentola,' in which a ring is substituted for the symbolical slipper—an unmeaning change."

Balzac had no knowledge of folklore; indeed, its study was scarcely known in his day, and had certainly not then attained the dignity of a science. The suggestion, which did not originate with Balzac, that the famous shoe was of fur may be true or may have been made

<sup>1</sup> Everyman Edition, p. 49.



merely on account of the tempting similarity of the words *vair* (miniver, or ermine) and *verre*. It is unfortunate, however, that in the variants in which the slipper occurs it is often of silver, gold, or other material. Balzac's criticism is, therefore, of no import; but his remark that the substitution of a ring is an "unmeaning change" is a serious error, since in certain versions the heroine is recognized by a ring instead of a slipper.

The Cinderella cycle of stories has been studied exhaustively by Miss Cox in a considerable volume,<sup>1</sup> and to her every student of folklore is greatly indebted. It is a tale which has nearly four hundred variants, which may be classed in three groups, each characterized by an essential incident.

1. In the *Cinderella* group there is an ill-treated heroine who is finally recognized by means of a shoe.

2. In the *Catskin* type the heroine flies from an unnatural father.

3. In the *Câp o' Rushes* type the mistaken anger of the father—the "King Lear Judgment"—banishes the heroine, the story thus passing into the "Outcast Child" cycle.

Before proceeding further, it will be convenient to give the typical story in each group.

## § 2. *Cinderella and Rashin Coatie*

Perrault's original story of Cendrillon describes a heroine ill-treated by a stepmother and stepsisters, by whom she is made to do the menial work of the house. She therefore lives by the hearth—"among the cinders." She is thus akin to the Greek goddess Hestia, the guardian of the hearth. There to her comes a fairy god-mother who transforms the pumpkin, mice, rats, and lizards into a coach and attendants to convey her to the ball, and her rags into a magic dress. Cendrillon attends

<sup>1</sup> M. R. Cox, "Cinderella" (1893).

a ball on three successive nights, with the injunction to leave before midnight. At these balls she meets the prince, who falls in love with her. Twice she obeys the condition laid down, but the third time she fails, when the fairy equipage and her rags are retransformed and she loses a shoe. There is thus a *threefold flight*, which has dropped out of the modern story-books and pantomimes. Finally she is recognized by the shoe and marries the prince, this ending being known as "the shoe-marriage test."

The Scots variant of Cinderella is "Rashin Coatie," meaning "coat of rushes." The following is given as told by Miss Margaret Craig, of Darliston, Elgin,<sup>1</sup> merely avoiding needless repetition:—

"There was a king and a queen. The queen died and left a bonnie little lassie, and she had naught to give her but a little red calf. She told the child that whatever she wanted the calf would give her. The king married again, an ill-natured wife, with three ugly daughters of her own. They did not like the lassie because she was bonnie, and they took away her fine clothes and put her on a rashin coatie and made her sit in the kitchen nook, and every one called her Rashin Coatie. She only got the scraps to eat, but did not care, because the calf gave her good meat. But the stepmother had the calf killed because it was good to Rashin Coatie. She was very sorry, and sat down and wept. But the calf said to her:—

Tak' me up, bane by bane,  
And pit me aneth yon grey stane,  
And whatever you want, come and seek it frae me, and  
I will give you it.

"At Yule-tide every one put on their best clothes to go to church. Rashin Coatie wanted to go, but the others said: 'What would you do at church, you nasty thing? Bide at home and make the dinner.' When they had

<sup>1</sup> "Folklore," i (1890), pp. 289-91.

gone Rashin Coatie did not know how to make dinner, and she went down to the grey stone and told the calf. He gave her fine clothes, and told her to go into the house and say :—

Every peat gar ither burn,  
 Every spit gar ither turn,  
 Every pot gar ither play,  
 Till I come frae the kirk this good Yule-day.

She put on the clothes and went to church and was the grandest lady there. A young prince fell in love with her. She left before the benediction, got home, and changed to the rashin coatie. The calf laid the table and got ready the dinner before the family returned. The three sisters said to her: 'Had you only seen the beautiful lady in the church to-day that the prince fell in love with.' She said: 'I wish you'd let me go with you to church to-morrow.' They refused as before. Next day the whole thing happened again, the calf giving her even better clothes. The prince was more in love than ever, and sent some one to watch where she returned. But she eluded him, and the calf prepared the table and dinner as before.

"Next day she received better clothes than ever and went again to church. The prince put a guard on the door, but she jumped over his head, leaving one satin slipper. She reached home, and the calf and dinner incident was repeated. The prince proclaimed that he would marry whomever the satin slipper fitted. Every lady went, also the three sisters. The slipper fitted none. The hen-wife took her daughter and cut her heels and toes, and the slipper was forced on, and the prince had to marry her, for he had to keep his promise. As he rode along with her behind him to be married a bird sang :—

Minched fit, and pinched fit,  
 Beside the king she rides,  
 But braw fit, and bonny fit,  
 In the kitchen neuk she hides.

"The prince said, 'What is it the bird sings?', but the hen-wife said, 'Nasty, lying thing! Never mind what she sings.' But the bird kept on singing. The prince said: 'Oh, there must be some one that the slipper has not been tried on'; but they said: 'There is none but a poor dirty thing that sits in the kitchen neuk and wears a rashin coatie.' The prince insisted on trying it on Rashin Coatie, but she ran away to the grey stone, where the calf dressed her better than ever, and she went to the prince, and the slipper jumped out of his pocket and on to her foot, and the prince married her, and they lived happy all their days."

This tale comprises all the essentials of Cinderella, including the three-fold flight, and it must be noted that it contains a calf, really the mother living on in another form, which is killed and works magic from its bones. This indicates an early form of the story before the fairy godmother was substituted for the animal.

### § 3. *Catskin*

In this group the "unnatural father" incident is introduced—a feature which I shall notice later on. The type stories are "*Peau d'Âne*"<sup>1</sup> and "*The Princess and the Catskins*."<sup>2</sup> In the former there is an unnatural father who makes his daughter's life a burden. She receives magic dresses from a fairy godmother, and demands of her the skin of a gold ass. The heroine runs away disguised in an ass-skin dress made by the fairy godmother. She performs menial tasks as a goose-girl at the palace, and is ordered to help cook for a dinner party. She is discovered by the prince looking through the keyhole. He bids her put his ring into a cake, and during the party pretends to choke, and promises to wed the girl who can extract the ring from his throat. The

<sup>1</sup> Baissac, "*Le Folklore de l'Ile Maurice*" (1888), No. xi, pp. 118-28.

<sup>2</sup> P. Kennedy, "*Fireside Stories of Ireland*" (1875), pp. 81-7.

operation is performed by the heroine, with the usual happy marriage result.

In Catskin there is also an unnatural father, and the heroine is assisted in her tasks by fairy aid from a filly, who gives her magic dresses. She flies, disguised in a catskin dress. A hunting prince finds her in the forest and takes her to his palace, where she performs the usual menial tasks. The prince, that he may observe her, orders her to bring him a basin and towel; hot water and towel; needle and thread. They meet at a ball three times, and she is at last recognized by means of a ring placed by the prince on her finger on the third occasion, and they are blissfully united.

The number of variants of the Catskin series of which Miss Cox gives abstracts is seventy-seven, but there is no need to give details of them here.

#### § 4. *Cap o' Rushes*

In this group the "King Lear Judgment" is introduced, and the stories become connected with those of the Outcast Child cycle. Following my intention of giving special prominence to British fairy-tales, I quote in full that narrated in "Longman's Magazine"<sup>1</sup> and described as told to the writer when a child by an old East Anglian servant.

"Well, there was once a very rich gentleman, and he'd three daughters, and he thought to see how fond they was of him. So he says to the first: 'How much do you love me, my dear?' 'Why,' says she, 'as I love life.' 'That's good,' says he. So he says to the second: 'How much do *you* love me, my dear?' 'Why,' says she, 'better nor all the world.' 'That's good,' says he. So he says to the third: 'How much do *you* love me, my dear?' 'Why, I love you as fresh meat loves salt,' says she. Well, he was that angry. 'You don't love me at all,' says he,

<sup>1</sup> xiii (1889), p. 441.

'and in my house you stay no more.' So he drove her out there and then, and shut the door in her face.

"Well, she went away on and on till she came to a fen, and there she gathered a lot of rushes and made them into a cloak, kind o' with a hood, to cover her from head to foot, and to hide her fine clothes. And then she went on and on till she came to a great house. 'Do you want a maid?' says she. 'No, we don't,' says they. 'I hain't nowhere to go,' says she, 'and I ask no wages, and do any sort o' work,' says she. 'Well,' says they, 'if you like to wash the pots and scrape the saucepans you may stay,' says they. So she stayed there and washed the pots and scraped the saucepans and did all the dirty work. And because she gave no name they called her 'Cap o' Rushes.'

"Well, one day there was a great dance a little way off, and the servants was let to go and look at the grand people. Cap o' Rushes said she was too tired to go, so she stayed at home. But when they was gone she offed with her cap o' rushes, and cleaned herself, and went to the dance. And no one there was so finely dressed as her. Well, who should be there but her master's son, and what should he do but fall in love with her the minute he set eyes on her. He wouldn't dance with any one else. And before the dance were done, Cap o' Rushes she slipped off, and away she went home. And when the other maids was back she was framin' to be asleep with her cap o' rushes on.

"Well, next morning they says to her: 'You did miss a sight, Cap o' Rushes!' 'What was that?,' says she. 'Why, the beautifulest lady you ever see, dressed right gay and ga'. The young master, he never took his eyes off of her.' 'Well, I should have liked to have seen her,' says Cap o' Rushes. 'Well, there's to be another dance this evening, and perhaps she'll be there.'

"But come the evening, Cap o' Rushes said she was too tired to go with them. Howsumdever, when they was

gone, she offed with her cap o' rushes and cleaned herself, and away she went to the dance. The master's son had been reckoning on seeing her, and he danced with no one else, and never took his eyes off of her. But before the dance was over, she slipped off, and when the maids came back she was framed to be asleep with her cap o' rushes on.

"Next day they says to her again : ' Well, Cap o' Rushes, you should ha' been there to see the lady. There she was again, gay and ga', and the young master he never took his eyes off of her.' ' Well, there,' says she, ' I should ha' liked to ha' seen her.' ' Well,' says they, ' there's a dance again this evening, and you must go with us for she's sure to be there.'

" Well, come the evening, Cap o' Rushes said she was too tired to go, and do what they would she stayed at home. But when they was gone, she offed with her cap o' rushes and cleaned herself, and away she went to the dance. The master's son was rarely glad when he saw her. He danced with none but her, and never took his eyes off of her. When she wouldn't tell him her name, nor where she came from, he gave her a ring and told her if he didn't see her again he should die. Well, afore the dance was over, off she slipped, and home she went, and when the maids came home she was fram'in' to be asleep with her cap o' rushes on.

" Well, next day they says to her : ' There, Cap o' Rushes, you didn't come last night, and now you won't see the lady, for there's no more dances.' ' Well, I should ha' rarely liked to ha' seen her,' says she.

" The master's son he tried every way to find out where the lady was gone, but go where he might and ask whom he might, he never heard nothing about her. And he got worse and worse for the love of her till he had to keep his bed.

" ' Make some gruel for the young master,' they says to the cook, ' for he's dying for love of the lady.' ' Let

me make it,' says Cap o' Rushes. Well, the cook wouldn't at first, but at last she said yes, and Cap o' Rushes made the gruel. And when she had made it she slipped the ring into it on the sly before the cook took it upstairs. The young man drank it, and he saw the ring at the bottom. 'Send for the cook,' says he. So up she comes. 'Who made this here gruel?' says he. 'I did,' says the cook, for she was frightened. And he looked at her. 'No, you didn't,' says he; 'say who did it, and you shan't be harmed.' 'Well, then, 'twas Cap o' Rushes,' says she. 'Send Cap o' Rushes here,' says he. And Cap o' Rushes came. 'Did you make my gruel?,' says he. 'Yes, I did,' says she. 'Where did you get this ring?,' says he. 'From him as gave it me,' says she. 'Who are you then?,' says the young man. 'I'll show you,' says she. And she offed with her cap o' rushes, and there she was in her beautiful clothes.

"Well, the master's son he got well very soon, and they was to be married in a little time. It was to be a very grand wedding, and every one was asked far and near. And Cap o' Rushes's father was asked. But she never told nobody who she was. But before the wedding she went to the cook and says she: 'I want you to dress every dish without a mite o' salt.' 'That'll be rarely nasty,' says the cook. 'That don't signify,' says she. 'Very well,' says the cook.

"Well, the wedding came, and they was married. And after they was married all the company sat down to their vittles. When they began to eat the meat, that was so tasteless they couldn't eat it. But Cap o' Rushes's father he tried first one dish and then another, and then he burst out crying. 'What is the matter?,' says the master's son to him. 'Oh!', says he, 'I had a daughter. And I asked her how much she loved me. And she said as much as fresh meat loves salt. And I turned her from my door, for I thought she didn't love me. And now I see she loved me best of all. And she may be



dead for aught I know.' 'No, father, here she is!', says Cap o' Rushes. And she goes up to him and puts her arms round him.

"And so they was happy ever after."

Miss Cox gives nineteen abstracts of variants of the Cap o' Rushes story from Palermo ("La Sendrarœula"), Venice ("Loving Like Salt"), Agenais ("The Turkey Girl"), Spain ("Johnny of the Bark"), Sweden ("Salt and Bread"), Portugal ("Salt and Water"), Rome ("Value of Salt"), Italy ("Blear-eye"), Bologna ("Story of the Candlestick"), Abruzzi ("The Screw of Salt," in which the father offers presents and the heroine chooses a screw of salt), Belgium ("She Sweeps the Oven" and "Little Dirty Skin"), Swabia ("Loving Like Salt"), Corsica ("Peau d'Âne"), Haute Bretagne ("La Pouilleuse" and "As Much as Salt"), and Grimm's "Goose-girl at the Well."

The opening incident in this type is the King Lear Judgment. This form of story has been ably examined by Hartland in his essay on "The Outcast Child,"<sup>1</sup> which is so linked with the Cinderella cycle as to demand a section to itself.

### § 5. *The Outcast Child*

This form of story describes how a child is rejected by father and family for a slight offence, and who from an outcast becomes a prince or princess and compels the parent to acknowledge his wrong. It is universal, and the two most familiar examples are the story of King Lear, immortalized by Shakespeare, and the Old Testament "history" of Joseph and his Brethren. It was only comparatively recently that the fundamental connection between these two time-honoured folk-tales was recognized.

The Outcast Child stories fall into five types, three of which are examples of myths in which the hero or

<sup>1</sup> "Folklore Journal" (1886), iv, pp. 308-49.

heroine is the youngest of several children ("Youngest-best Stories"). The types are given by Hartland as

#### A. YOUNGEST-BEST STORIES.

1. *King Lear type*. All describe the adventures of a king's three daughters, in which the conduct of the elder children strongly contrasts with that of the youngest.

2. *Value of Salt type*. In this the story of the elder children is not told. The catastrophe is brought about by the heroine's reply to her father when asked how much she loves him.

3. *Joseph type*. The catastrophe is due to the father's anger arising from a different cause to those in the preceding types, usually by the dream of the hero or heroine. It deals sometimes with sons, sometimes with daughters.

#### B. ONLY SON STORIES.

4. *Ravens type*.

5. *Language of Beasts type*. These two types are related but distinguishable. Both deal with the career of a younger son who falls without reasonable cause under his father's anger.

It is not my intention to enter deeply into this cycle of stories, as those who are interested can obtain a wealth of detail from Hartland's original paper. There are, however, certain interesting details which must not be omitted, as they bear upon problems in the origin and transmission of fairy-tales.

In the story of King Lear Shakespeare closely followed that told by Geoffrey of Monmouth, written down in the twelfth century. Whence the latter obtained it is uncertain—possibly from a collection of fairy-tales. The Tales of Mabinogion, which make frequent mention of Lear, are on a distinct level from those of Geoffrey of Monmouth, and no research has yet found, even in Saga-form, any of the latter's stories. The "*Gesta Romanorum*" (compiled probably in England at the end of the thirteenth

century) contains tales of more or less remotely popular origin, fitted with applications which treated them as parables for medieval preachers. One tale identical with that of Lear's three daughters is told of the Emperor Theodosius, and it is difficult not to conclude that this story did not owe its existence to Geoffrey of Monmouth's Lear, although not immediately, the story being orally transmitted before it was written.

The Protean character of folk-tales is well shown in a variant stated by Bladé,<sup>1</sup> to be still heard from the peasants of south-western France. A widowed king, who loves salt, asks the usual question, and his youngest daughter replies that she loves him like salt. In her subsequent adventures a lost slipper connects the tale with Cinderella, while in a Corsican variant<sup>2</sup> an ass's skin and a lost shoe are introduced, but a son is substituted for a daughter.

In the Value of Salt type the simplest form is the tale with that title told in Miss Busk's "Folklore of Rome" (p. 403), in which a king shuts his daughter up, but she induces the cook to serve dinner without salt. In most of the variants the heroine passes through a series of adventures, and in the greater number the *Peau d'Âne* incident is introduced. As, however, the elder sisters' adventures are not narrated, there is no ill-treatment by them of the father. In some variants the heroine is condemned to death, but is saved by a trick of the executioner, who kills something else.

In the Joseph type the Old Testament story is not the simplest, as other folk-tales have been incorporated with it. In variants of this type the child is sometimes male, sometimes female. Hartland considers that the relations of *Peau d'Âne* to the Outcast Child are rather those of an accidental blending; indeed, the adventures which

<sup>1</sup> J. F. Bladé, "Contes Populaires recueillis en Agenais" (1874), No. 8, p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> J. B. F. Ortoli, "Contes Populaires de l'Ile de Corse" (1883), p. 48.

befall the hero or heroine after expulsion from home show endless variation. A Brazilian variant<sup>1</sup> takes us a step further back, and contains the only allusion to enchantment found in these stories. In this King Andrade has three daughters, whom he makes relate their dreams every morning. One says she dreamed of a change in her condition, and that five kings, including her father, will kiss her hand. She is condemned to death, but is spared with the loss of her little finger. She enters a cave full of riches and inhabited by a parrot which is an enchanted prince. He marries her, and five kings are invited, including, of course, her father, whom she refuses to allow to kiss her hand. Hartland gives numerous variations of the Joseph type from Persia, India, Kashmir, etc., and points out that it is one of the characteristics of the Outcast Child cycle that it lends itself with remarkable ease to the inweaving of other tales, as instanced by a Kashmiri story of "The Prince that was Three Times Wrecked," in which there is a whole jumble of adventures and an ogre of the Punchkin type. "The Emperor's Son-in-Law," a Serbian tale, is remarkable in that the boy is cast out for *refusing* to tell his dream; in it, too, the place of the brothers is occupied by the sons of the Vizier. A Wallachian variant contains the same curious incident of refusal.

In The Ravens type the hero's brothers and sisters are absent, and his own adventures show but little variety in the variants. The type-tale is "The Ravens," incorporated in "The Seven Sages."<sup>2</sup> In this a youth who knows the language of birds rows over an arm of the sea with his father to a small island. Three ravens alight on the boat and make a noise, at which the boy laughs. His father asks him why, and he replies that they say he will thereafter be so high that his father and mother will be glad to fetch him water and a towel. The wrathful

<sup>1</sup> S. Romero, "Contos Populares do Brazil" (1885).

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Wright's edition, printed for the Percy Society, p. 106.

parent casts him into the sea, whence a fisherman rescues him. They are driven by the current to another country, where his rescuer sells him. The king, being tormented by the three ravens, summons his council, and promises his daughter to the man who rids him of them. The hero states that two of the ravens are male birds, who dispute the possession of the third, the hen bird, and want the king's judgment. This is given, and the ravens fly away. The hero marries the king's daughter, and the prophecy is fulfilled. Variants are Italian, French (in which the bird is a nightingale), Russian (in which the hero's name is Basil, meaning "kingly," and the nightingale again occurs), Basque ("a bird"), and Portuguese (in which the moon is the prophet).

The Language of Beasts type is very popular, especially in France and Italy, and is specially interesting for reasons shortly to be given. The standard story (from which the type is named) is narrated by Fleury.<sup>1</sup> A man hands his son to a poor neighbour to kill, because at school he learned nothing but the language of dogs, frogs, and birds. His mother objects, and the hero is spared, a bitch being killed in his place, and the heart taken to the father. The boy falls in with two priests going to Rome. They are lodged in a house which, he hears from a dog, is undermined by robbers, and he is thereby able to save the party. He next heals a girl who has been stricken deaf and dumb because she dropped a portion of the host at her first communion and it was swallowed by a frog; he hears this by listening to the frogs talking, and so recovers the sacred morsel. On reaching Rome, they find the Pope is dead, and the hero hears the birds saying that he will himself be chosen to fill the vacancy. The two priests fancy their own chances and promise him preferment. He is, of course, elected Pope. Meanwhile his mother has died of grief, and his remorseful father has

<sup>1</sup> J. Fleury, "Litterature Orale de la Basse-Normandie" (1893), p. 123.

confessed, but is refused absolution and referred to the Bishop. The Bishop cannot decide, and refers the case to the new Pope, who hears his own father confess, and then reveals himself. The Mantuan story of Bobo<sup>1</sup> differs from this in unimportant details only, as do others from Montferrat and Sicily.<sup>2</sup> In the last-named the father sends his son to Catania, where he takes a doctor's degree. When asked by his father what is the most useful thing in the world, he replies "A close stool!" for which he is driven out and cursed. Thus well fitted for the Church, he enters it, becomes Pope, and convinces his father of the truth of his answer.

Hartland points out that the rise of the Popedom shows this last type to be the latest form of the Outcast Child cycle. The Language of Beasts is a modern development from The Ravens, and the transition is not difficult, especially as it entails the father's absolution. Older folk-tales were altered by the Church to a narrative, which, like the Sicilian story, was considered edifying to the faithful. The Ravens type can be traced back into the Middle Ages. The framework of the Outcast Child tale contains no marvellous incidents, and lends itself well to transformation from *märchen* to *Saga*—a fact which greatly assists the preservation of folk-tales as literature.

### § 6. *Other Cinderella Stories*

Although the discussion of the Outcast Child series has been partly in the nature of a digression, it will have shown how two cycles of stories can become blended, resulting in variants which, just as a child may bear the likenesses of both parents, may possess the features of both types. We can now return to the more strictly Cinderella stories. Besides the three groups already noticed, Miss Cox gives eighty abstracts of stories which she classifies as "Inde-

<sup>1</sup> J. Visentini, "Fiabe Mantovane" (1879), No. 23, p. 131.

<sup>2</sup> G. Pitré, "Fiabe, Novelline e Racconti Popolare Siciliane" (1875), i, p. 90.

terminate." Forty-three of these are referable to Cinderella types, of which Grimm's "One Eye, Two Eyes, and Three Eyes," mentioned in Chapter III, is an example, and thirty-seven are not referable to any distinct type.

Finally, she gives twenty-three abstracts of Hero-Tales of the Cinderella type, of which "De Little Bull-Calf,"<sup>1</sup> a gipsy story, is a good example. In this the hero is ill-treated by his stepfather, but is helped by a bull-calf (the "helpful animal") and an old man. He flies mounted on the helpful beast, which fights and kills several wild beasts, but is itself killed by a dragon. The hero skins the bull and inflates its large gut, which will kill everything it hits. A princess is staked down as a prey for the dragon, and is rescued by the hero, who slays the monster with the bull's gut. The hero then cuts out the dragon's tongue and takes leave of the princess, who secretly ties a diamond ring in his hair. The king is surprised to find his daughter alive and the dragon dead, releases her, and proclaims that she shall wed her deliverer and that he shall succeed to the kingdom. Then follows the "trophy marriage tests," and impostors show the tongues they have cut from various beasts. The hero, poorly clad, is turned away, but returns better dressed, and the usual happy marriage follows his recognition by means of the dragon's tongue and the ring. In this story the Cinderella and Outcast Child cycles, with the animal helping during life and by magic after its death, and the essential features of the Dragon Sacrifice cycle, can all be recognized. Probably the bull-calf was originally the hero's father.

Before considering other features of the Cinderella stories, mention must be made of one or two savage variants. Tremearne<sup>2</sup> gives a Hausa story, "The Tender-Hearted Maiden and the Fish," which belongs to these. The heroine is sent by her stepmother to wash a fish in

<sup>1</sup> "Gipsy-Lore Society Journal," iii, pp. 208-10.

<sup>2</sup> "Hausa Superstitions and Customs" (1913), p. 187.

the river, with the promise of a thrashing if she lets it go. The fish, with a happy disregard of comparative physiology, begs her to allow it to go, to "give my young ones suck." Of course, the maiden allows it to do so, and when it returns her tender heart refuses to pick it out of the water. It bids her farewell, enjoining her to return next morning. The girl receives the promised beating and keeps the fish's appointment. It brings with it its numerous relations, which all thank her. Later it provides her with dresses, the result being that the king marries her. But at night the other women of the palace cut off her hands, which are restored to her by the grateful fish, and the usual happy ending follows. Tremearne refers also to another and closer Cinderella variant collected by Major Edgar,<sup>1</sup> in which a frog takes the place of the fish, and the maiden is recognized by her boot of gold, which she leaves behind her. It is the step-mother who tries to take her place in the palace and is killed when discovered.

But of all the savage Cinderella stories, the most beautiful is that told by the MicMac Indians (a branch of the Eastern Algonquins).<sup>2</sup> This Leland believed to be an old solar myth, worked up with Cinderella, and derived from Canadian-French sources. There is also a Passamaquoddy version which Leland described as a Cupid and Psyche story. It contains, however, no tabu, and is much more likely to have sprung from the primitive Cinderella base. This MicMac gem is called "The Invisible One," and its beauty excuses its introduction here :—

"There was once a large Indian village situated on the border of a lake. At the end of the place was a lodge, in which dwelt a being who was always invisible. He had a sister, who attended to his wants, and it was known that any girl who could see him might marry him. Therefore, there were few indeed who did not make the trial, but it was long e'er one succeeded.

<sup>1</sup> "Litafi na Tatsuniyoyi na Hausa," vol. ii, p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> C. G. Leland, *l.c.*, p. 303.



"But it passed in this wise. Towards evening, when the Invisible One was supposed to be returning home, his sister would walk with any girls who came down to the shore of the lake. She, indeed, could see her brother, since to her he was always visible, and beholding him she would say to her companions: 'Do you see my brother?' And then they would mostly answer 'Yes,' though some said 'Nay.' And then the sister would say: 'Of what is his shoulder strap made?' But as some tell the tale, she would inquire other things, such as: 'What is his moose-runner's haul?' or 'With what does he draw his sled?' And they would reply: 'A strip of raw-hide,' or 'A green withe,' or something of the kind. And then she, knowing they had not told the truth, would reply quietly: 'Very well, let us return to the wigwam!'

"And when they entered the place she would bid them not to take a certain seat, for it was his. And after they had helped to cook the supper they would wait with great curiosity to see him eat. Truly he gave proof that he was a real person, for as he took off his moccasins they became visible, and his sister hung them up; but beyond this they beheld nothing, not even when they remained all night, as many did.

"There dwelt in the village an old man, a widower, with three daughters. The youngest of these was very small, weak, and often ill, which did not prevent her sisters, especially the eldest, treating her with great cruelty. The second daughter was kinder, and sometimes took the part of the poor abused little girl, but the other would burn her hands and feet with hot coals; yes, her whole body was scarred with the marks made by torture, so that people called her *Oochigeaskw* (the rough-faced girl). And when her father, coming home, asked what it meant that the child was so disfigured, her sister would promptly say that it was the fault of the girl herself, for that having been forbidden to go near the fire she had disobeyed and fallen in.

"Now it came to pass that it entered the heads of the two elder sisters of this poor girl that they would go and try their fortune at seeing the Invisible One. So they clad themselves in their finest and strove to look their fairest; and finding his sister at home with her to take the wonted walk down to the water. Then when He came, being asked if they saw him, they said: 'Certainly'; and also replied to the question of the shoulder strap or sled cord: 'A piece of raw hide.' In saying which they lied like the rest, for they had seen nothing, and got nothing for their pains.

"When their father returned home the next evening he brought with him many of the pretty little shells from which wampum was made, and they were soon engaged in stringing them.

"That day poor little Oochigeaskw, the burnt-faced girl, who had always run barefoot, got a pair of her father's old moccasins, and put them into water that they might become flexible to wear. And begging her sisters for a few wampum shells, the eldest did but call her 'a lying little pest,' but the other gave her a few. And having no clothes beyond a few paltry rags, the poor creature went forth and got herself from the woods a few sheets of birch bark, of which to make a dress, putting some figures on the bark. And this dress she shaped like those worn of old. So she made a petticoat and a loose gown, a cap, leggings, and handkerchief; and having put on her father's great old moccasins, which came nearly up to her knees, she went forth to try her luck. For even this little thing would see the Invisible One in the great wigwam at the end of the village.

"Truly her luck had a most inauspicious beginning, for there was one long storm of ridicule and hisses, yells and hoots, from her own door to that she went to seek. Her sisters tried to shame her, and bade her stay at home, but she would not obey; and all the idlers, seeing this strange little creature in her odd array, cried 'Shame!'

But she went on, for she was greatly resolved ; it may be that some spirit had inspired her.

"Now this poor wretch in her mad attire, with her hair singed off, and her little face as full of burns and scars as there are holes in a sieve, was for all this most kindly received by the sister of the Invisible One ; for this noble girl knew more than the mere outside of things as the world knows them. And as the brown of the evening sky became black, she took her down to the lake. And ere long the girls knew He had come. Then the sister said : 'Do you see him ?' And the other replied with awe : 'Truly I do—and he is wonderful.' 'And what is his sled-string ?' 'It is,' she replied, 'the Rainbow.' And great fear was on her. 'But, my sister,' said the other, 'what is his bow-string ?' 'His bow-string is *Ketak-soowowcht*, the Spirit's Road' [the Milky Way].

"'Thou hast seen him,' said the sister. And taking the girl home, she bathed her, and as she washed all the scars disappeared from face and body. Her hair grew again ; it was very long, and like a blackbird's wing. Her eyes were like stars. In all the world was no such beauty. Then from her treasures she gave her a wedding garment, and adorned her. Under the comb, as she combed her, her hair grew. It was a great marvel to behold.

"Then, having done this, she bade her take the *wife's seat* in the wigwam—that by which her brother sat, the seat next the door. And when He entered, terrible and beautiful, he smiled and said '*Wajoolkoos !*' 'So we are found out !' '*Alajulaa.*' 'Yes,' was her reply. So she became his wife."

A more beautiful story than this would be hard to find in any collection of fairy-tales.

### § 7. General Considerations

Miss Cox gives a chronological list of Cinderella variants between 1544 and 1892, and it would be interesting to know whence the story as we know it came. It has been

suggested that Perrault borrowed his "Peau d'Âne" from Straparola (1550), as the former's collection appeared in 1694-7, and twelve editions of Straparola's stories, which were nothing more than already existing oral tales put into presentable literary form, had been issued before that date. A still earlier version by Des Periers was published in 1544, and a hero-tale of the Cinderella type by Rollenhagen (1542-1609) existed. The exact number of variants tabulated by Miss Cox is 345, but she acknowledges that this is by no means exhaustive, and that they could be multiplied.

The Cinderella cycle well shows how isolated incidents in folk-tales may recur in infinitely varied compositions. "Many of the embellishments are due to the narrator, who, as Sir Walter Scott said of himself, 'could never repeat a story without giving it a new hat and stick.'" Many detached incidents of the Cinderella and Catskin stories are commonplaces of folk-tale. It will be interesting to most readers to hear that the fairy godmother, so prominent in the story as told to the modern child and illustrated in modern pantomime, figures but rarely in the variants. In one from Liguria, which is believed to be unique, she doubles the part with the stepmother. She was, as I have already pointed out, substituted for the helpful beast, originally probably the beast-mother, at a comparatively late stage. The late Andrew Lang remarked that "We may conjecture that the ass-skin worn by Peau d'Âne was originally the hide of the beast helpful to her." This appears to be the case in two Swedish variants and in a Finnish variant. In nearly every variant the helpful beast is a domesticated animal, the exceptions being: White bear (Swedish), ermine (Swedish),<sup>1</sup> wolf (Danish), fish (Annamese, Swedish, Hausa, and two Italian versions), eel (Jutland), mouse (Slavonic), and toad (Hungarian).

<sup>1</sup> Had Balzac been aware of this he might have used it in support of his *pantoufle de vair*.

According to some writers, the Catskin stories are based upon nature myths connected with the phenomena of night and day and the seasons of the year. The story of Aslaug, the daughter of Siegfried and Brynhild, in the "Volsunga Saga," is a striking parallel to Cinderella, and there are many hero-tales in which a term of servitude occurs (Apollo, Hercules, Perceval). De Gubernatis sought to show that "Ahalyâ (the evening Aurora) in the ashes is the germ of the story of Cinderella, and of the daughter of the King of Dacia, persecuted by her lover, her father himself"; but this has been conclusively confuted by Lang in his introduction to Perrault.

The shoe incident, so dear to children, was probably a story-telling commonplace before it was introduced into the German poem of King Rother, written in the early part of the twelfth century. The material of the famous slipper varies from simple satin to silver, gold, or glass. In connection with the incident an atypical Cinderella story (not included by Miss Cox on that account) shows how local circumstances may influence incidents in folk-tale. In this story, the Bosnian "Am Ur-quell," the shoe does not occur, because in Bosnia (1) no shoes but only a kind of sandal are worn; (2) a large foot is considered an advantage; and (3) the manner of wooing is unlike any Bosnian custom.

It has been pointed out that in the Catskin group of Cinderella stories an unnatural father figures, who persecutes his daughter from amorous motives. This "unlawful marriage" opening has been utilized in legendary histories of Christian saints in many medieval romances and in the mysteries based thereon. The episodes met with in these romances are: (1) The flight of the daughter from the father-lover. (2) The amputation of her hands, which are miraculously restored.

<sup>1</sup> C. Perrault, "Popular Tales," edited by A. Lang, 1888, c.

(3) Her persecution by her mother-in-law (less frequently her step-mother) and the fraudulent exchange of letters.  
 (4) The reunion in distant lands of father and daughter, husband and wife. The incident of the amputation of the heroine's hands to repulse the unnatural father occurs in one variant of Cinderella (Serbian). It is introduced into the Hausa story given above, but here the hands are chopped off by the other wives, although the reason for the act is analogous. In one tale, in de Games's "Victorial," it is made to account for the long wars between England and France, and the theme is found in most of the Western medieval literature. One of the oldest forms occurs in Matthew Paris's "*Vitæ duorum Offarum*," in which the foundation of St. Alban's Abbey is made the redemption of a vow by Offa I in a similar story. It is to be noted that both Offa I and Offa II are to a great extent fabulous as regards their lives.

In some stories, of which that of Danaë may be taken as the germ, the heroine is exposed in a boat, and this occurs in the legend of the wife of Offa II. In a similar tale told of a king of Hungary<sup>1</sup> the hand amputation and the boat occur. There are other versions in which the story is adapted to historical persons, mostly fabulous, or of real or supposed historicity. One occurs in Chaucer's "*Man of Lawes Tale*," adapted to King Alla of Northumberland. In several of these the story accounts for war between France and England.

Certain Norwegian hero-tales are close parallels of Cinderella. In some (Polish, South German) the ill-treated youngest child is helped by his dead father at the grave, and in Russian and German stories the youngest child has a hearth abode and a significant nickname. As regards the youngest-child incident, it may be noted that Cinderella is not invariably the youngest child, especially when she is a step-child.

<sup>1</sup> "*Roman de la Manekine*" (xiii cent.).

In conclusion, the variants and parallels of the Cinderella story seem well nigh endless. Indeed, the cycle is in itself a complete study of the evolution of fairy-tales.

## CHAPTER VI

### BLUEBEARD AND THE FORBIDDEN CHAMBER

"Wedding fingers are sweet pretty things,  
Bloudie Jack !  
To salute them one eagerly strives,  
When one kneels to 'propose'—  
It's another *quelque chose*  
When cut off at the knuckles with knives,  
From our wives,  
They are tied up in bunches of fives."  
—"Ingoldsby Legends."

#### § 1. *Introductory*

"THE first diabolical character who intruded himself on my peaceful youth," says Charles Dickens,<sup>1</sup> "was a certain Captain Murderer. This wretch must have been an offshoot of the Bluebeard family, but I had no suspicion of the consanguinity in those times." Dickens was perfectly right in his surmise; his "Captain Murderer" belongs to the group of stories known to folklore students as "The Forbidden Chamber" cycle, of which Bluebeard is probably the best known, and which, like that of Cinderella, contains several types. The cycle has been carefully studied by Hartland, whose essay<sup>2</sup> contains practically all the information obtainable concerning it.

Hartland classifies these stories into seven types, in the first four of which the fatal curiosity is feminine, while in the last three it is masculine. These types are:—

1. Bluebeard.
2. The Dead Hand, with the sub-type of The Robber Chief.

<sup>1</sup> "The Uncommercial Traveller," chap. xv, "Nurse's Stories."

<sup>2</sup> E. S. Hartland, "The Forbidden Chamber," "Folklore Journal," vol. iii (1885), pp. 193-242.



3. Mary's Child.
4. The Faithless Sister.
5. Marya Morevna.
6. The Teacher and his Scholar, with the sub-type of Scabby John.
7. The Third Royal Mendicant.

As I have pointed out when discussing Tabu in Chapter IV, "The Forbidden Chamber" cycle is one containing a large number of stories in which the predominant incident is a tabu, probably originally a religious one. The common origin of these stories, however, has not yet been traced. Since reading Hartland's essay I have found that Tremearne<sup>1</sup> has recorded a Hausa story, "Dodo, the Robber, and the Forbidden Door," which belongs to this cycle, and which seems to reflect a religious tabu. It is interesting to note that in this tale the wife, before running away, spits on the floor, and the saliva replies for her. Tremearne also mentions another variant recorded by Edgar,<sup>2</sup> which bears the same religious tabu interpretation.

## § 2. *Bluebeard*

Of this group the well-known tale of Bluebeard and his chamber of horrors is the best known, although it is not an early development of the cycle, and is possibly one of the latest. It is widely spread in Western Europe, and tells of a woman who, married to a monster, disobeys her husband's express prohibition during his absence, and opens a certain door, behind which she finds the mutilated remains of her predecessors. Her disobedience is discovered by the husband from the ineradicable bloodstain upon the key, and he is about to add her to his collection in the Forbidden Chamber when he is killed by her rescuing brothers or friends. This story belongs to Perrault's series, and there is a practically similar version,

<sup>1</sup> "Hausa Superstitions and Customs," p. 209.    <sup>2</sup> *l.c.*, vol. ii, p. 16.

also called "King Blue Beard," from Swabia,<sup>1</sup> in which the wife's sister endeavours to dissuade her from her disobedience—an incident unusual in fairy-tales. In a Tuscan tale, "The Three Cauliflowers," a lap-dog protests, while in another story from the same country the husband tells his wife that his bitch will inform him as to her obedience. This "spy dog" incident occurs also in the Icelandic story of "The Giant Tricked,"<sup>2</sup> in which the animal lies in front of the forbidden door, but makes no objection to its being opened.

The method by which the heroine falls into Bluebeard's hands is usually by her marriage to him, a stranger. Very often the monster marries successive sisters under a disguise, or takes them as companions. Sometimes the wives are stolen, or caught stealing, or the mother is captured and gives her daughter as the price of her life. In an Icelandic tale she approximates to Cinderella.

The contents of the Forbidden Chamber vary, although they usually consist of Bluebeard's former wives. They are, however, not always dead (Tuscan, Basque), and sometimes only heads are found; sometimes also the sex of the bodies is not recorded. In certain Greek, Tuscan, and Basque variants it is an unfortunate prince who is discovered. In one group the husband is the Devil, and the forbidden door closes the entrance to Hell. In a Greek story, "The Timmatos," recorded by Legrand,<sup>3</sup> the wife sees through the forbidden-chamber window her husband as a monstrous ghoul. Occasionally the wife finds in the chamber an elixir with which to restore the bodies to life.

The way in which the wife's disobedience is detected varies. Usually it is the bloodstain on the key, sometimes the stain is on an egg or a ball, or it is by means of a

<sup>1</sup> E. Meier, "Deutsche Volksmärchen aus Schwaben," n.d., p. 184.

<sup>2</sup> Jon Arnason, "Icelandic Legends," trans. by Powell and Magnusson (1864-6), vol. ii, p. 498.

<sup>3</sup> E. Legrand, "Recueil de Contes Populaires Grecs" (1881), p. 115.

rose or a bouquet. In a Portuguese story the heroine is rewarded for restoring the dead bodies to life by their showing her how to clean the key, while in some versions her curiosity is not discovered at all.

In the type story the heroine's rescue differs from that in most variants in that it is effected by outside aid. In Grimm's tale of "Fitcher's Bird" (called in some editions "The Forbidden Room") she gets into a barrel of honey, then cuts open a bed, rolls herself in the feathers, and goes off as a bird. In an Icelandic version she escapes disguised in soot and ashes, and riding on a poker. Hartland suggests that this is a relic of an earlier form in which the heroine may have been changed into a bird to effect her escape, and he cites a Passamaquoddy story, "How One of the Partridge's Wives Became a Sheldrake Duck," in support of his contention.<sup>1</sup> This tells how a hunter possessed a small goblin on which his luck in hunting depended, and which he kept shut up in a box. His wife's curiosity made her open the box, when a hag made off with the goblin, and the hunter's luck at once deserted him. He returned to give his wife a well-deserved beating, whereupon she jumped into the water and became a sheldrake duck.<sup>2</sup> This story, which probably originated long before writing was invented, has another interest beside supporting Hartland's suggestion as to escape in the form of a bird; it reflects the fetish origin of the forbidden box or chamber. The parallel between the hunter's goblin kept in a box and Bluebeard's corpses in the forbidden chamber is obvious, since upon the safe keeping of both elf and bodies depended the husband's reputation.

The bird method of escape, however, is unusual. The customary manner is for the heroine to deceive her ogre spouse by making up a doll and putting it in bed, while

<sup>1</sup> Leland, *l.c.*, p. 300.

<sup>2</sup> This tale will be referred to later (Chapter IX) when dealing with the Swan-maiden cycle, and it will be seen that the wife was originally a bird.

she hides herself in a chest which he, unaware of its contents, carries to her home for her. This is what occurs in Mantuan, Venetian, Portuguese, Tyrolese, and Icelandic versions. Occasionally the doll incident is absent. In the Gaelic "Widow and her Daughters" the heroine is carried off by an enchanted prince in the form of a horse; in another Gaelic, as also in a Basque, version she kills her monster-husband; while in two other variants the latter assumes the character of Punchkin (see Chapter VII). Of these the first is a Tuscan tale,<sup>1</sup> in which the Bluebeard tells his wife that his life depends upon an egg; she knocks it from his hand, it breaks, and he dies. The second is Sicilian,<sup>2</sup> in which the husband's life depends upon a magic head which, having betrayed the first two wives to their death, is so flattered by the younger sister that it follows her about until she finds an opportunity of throwing it into the oven, when the Bluebeard dies.

### § 3. *The Dead Hand and Robber Bridegroom Types*

The Dead Hand type is common among the Romance and Slavonic peoples. The disobedience consists in failure to eat a portion of human flesh, usually a hand, before the demon-husband comes back. On his return he asks if he has been disobeyed, and tests the wife's replies by calling to the limb, which answers from the place where she has hidden it. The heroine, however, manages to deceive the ogre, who gives her his keys, with which she obtains his treasure and a magic ointment that heals wounds and restores life. She finds her sisters, heals them, and sends the monster home carrying them in chests, finally herself escaping by means of the doll trick. The chamber tabu does not occur save occasionally (Sicilian and Greek variants). It is here that

<sup>1</sup> V. Imbriana, "La Novellaja Fiorentina" (1877), p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> L. Gonzenbach, "Sicilianische Märchen" (1889), vol. i, p. 135.

the Bluebeard story becomes merged with the Forty Thieves,<sup>1</sup> the heroine marrying a stranger who is a robber chief. She deceives him, and he is killed while attempting revenge. To this subtype belongs the Hausa story mentioned above (p. 122); and the Zulus, Hottentots, Kafirs, and Malagasians all have very similar tales of rocks that open like the famous cavern with its "Open, Sesame!" There is an English Robber Bridegroom story, "Mr. Fox,"<sup>2</sup> and this has several local parallels in England in "Bloudie Jack of Shrewsbury," of Ingoldsby Legends fame; in Dickens's "Captain Murderer"; and in the stories told of Nayland Hall, Suffolk, and of "Bloody" Baker of Sissinghurst Castle, Kent. The last named appears to have been an historical personage, as there exists over the porch of Cranbrook Church the prison in which he passed his last hours before going to the stake. He was Sir John Baker, and filled the office of Recorder of London in the time of Edward VI, and afterwards that of Attorney General, having previously been sent, under Henry VIII in 1526, as Ambassador to Denmark. Banished for his popish opinions, he returned under Mary, when he was made Chancellor of the Exchequer. It is said that Mary exerted herself to save him from the stake, to which he was condemned for sorcery, but failed. A helmet, surcoat, and gauntlets which belonged to a Roberts of Glassenbury and now hang in Cranbrook Church are attributed to Baker by local tradition. Barham claims historicity for his "Bloudie Jack" (it may be noted that Baker's name was John) by stating that it is alluded to by Ralph de Diceto, who was made Dean of St. Paul's in 1183.

I heard the story of "Bloody Baker" from the mouth of the custodian of Sissinghurst Castle in 1890; it is

<sup>1</sup> The recent publication of a Second Series of Hieratic Papyri by the Trustees of the British Museum gives the story of the crafty capture of Joppa by a General of Thothmes III. He smuggled his men into the city in jars, so that possibly the method used by the Chief of the Forty Thieves was well known in the East.

<sup>2</sup> Jacobs, *l.c.*, p. 148.

practically identical with that of the Shrewsbury legend and of Mr. Fox. I prefer, however, to give the latter here as the type story. Probably it was adapted locally to Baker to justify his execution. In this tale a certain beautiful Lady Mary had two brothers and countless lovers, the bravest and most gallant of whom was Mr. Fox. No one knew anything about him, and, although he described his castle and its situation, he asked neither the Lady Mary nor her brothers to visit it. However, he and she were plighted. One day, near that fixed for the wedding and when her brothers were out and Mr. Fox away, she searched for her betrothed's castle and found it. Over the gate was written:—

“BE BOLD, BE BOLD.”

She passed it and came to the door, over which she read:—

“BE BOLD, BE BOLD, BUT NOT TOO BOLD.”

She entered, and, traversing the hall, ascended the stairs to the gallery. Here she found a door, having above it the couplet:—

“BE BOLD, BE BOLD, BUT NOT TOO BOLD,  
LEST THAT YOUR HEART'S BLOOD SHOULD RUN COLD.”

Nothing daunted, she opened the door, to find blood-stained skeletons and bodies of beautiful women. As, horrified, she turned to fly, she espied through a window Mr. Fox dragging a girl towards the castle. Running down the stairs, she hid behind a cask, from which place she noticed a diamond ring glittering upon the victim's finger. This Mr. Fox endeavoured to pull off, but, finding it difficult, he drew his sword with an oath and struck off the hand, which fell into the Lady Mary's lap. Fox made a little search for it, but did not think to look behind the barrel, and turned his attention to dragging the girl to his bloody chamber, during which the Lady Mary escaped home undetected. Next day the marriage

contract was to be signed, and at the breakfast Fox commented upon his betrothed's pallor. This she ascribed to a dream, in the guise of which she related her terrifying experience of the day before. On Fox's protest, "It is not so, nor 'twas not so, indeed, God forbid it should be so," she produced the hand and ring, whereupon her brothers and friends cut Mr. Fox to pieces. The story is referred to by Shakespeare in "Much Ado About Nothing" (act i, scene 1), when Benedick remarks: "Like the old tale, my Lord, 'It is not so, nor 'twas not so, but, indeed, God forbid it should be so.'"

An important variant of the Dead Hand type is the following, in which it inclines to "Beauty and the Beast," with the chest incident, the dragon sacrifice, and the fickle hero worked in. A king, hunting, pursues a hart, which enters a wood, and he loses it in a garden. He opens a door and enters another garden with golden trees and diamond herbs. Here he plucks a rose, a cord leaps out which binds him fast, and an angry dragon stands before him. The monster spares him on condition that he gives him one of his three daughters in marriage. The youngest girl consents, and the dragon takes her to his palace, which must have been a dismal place for a honeymoon, since in it was "always heard distant groaning." The dragon gives his wife keys, forbidding her to open one room. Of course, her curiosity overcomes her scruples and she transgresses. She finds a charm and a wounded youth. With the former she heals the hurts of the latter and releases him, after instructing him to have a gold chest made and sold to her. He is to buy it back when she has entered it, and thus effect her escape. But she enjoins him that if his mother should kiss him he will forget all about her. The warning is, as usual, in vain; the mother kisses him when sleeping, and he repudiates the chest ordered. The heroine buys it and gets inside. Thinking her gone, the dragon sells the chest, and it is ultimately bought by the young man.

When he opens it and sees the escaped heroine he remembers everything, and keeps her concealed. Unfortunately, he is obliged to go to the wars, and gives his mother orders not to move the chest and to put food in his room daily. Now, previous to his capture by the dragon the young man was betrothed to his cousin. His aunt, her mother, becomes suspicious, and obtains possession of the chest, which she orders to be thrown on to the fire. The heroine inside it hears this, and flies out as a bird, so the aunt replaces the chest. On the hero's return he finds it empty and mourns for his lost love, but the bird returns and resumes her proper form. The inevitable marriage and the decapitation of the aunt end the story.

#### § 4. *Mary's Child Type*

The next type is interesting as showing the influence of Christianity upon folk-tale. The representative story will be found in the collection of the Brothers Grimm. In it the Virgin appears to a woodman and offers to take his only child. The offer is accepted, and the child is carried up to heaven. One day the Virgin hands her thirteen keys, giving her leave to open all doors but one. Naturally, she disobeys, and sees "the Trinity sitting in fire and sheen." She touches the sheen upon them, and so gilds her finger. The Virgin returns and taxes her with her disobedience, which she denies, and is expelled from heaven in consequence. As if this were not punishment enough, she is stricken dumb in addition. She encounters the usual luck of unhappy damsels in fairy-tale, being found by a king out hunting. He, possibly realizing the value of a silent wife, marries her, and in due course she has a child. The Virgin appears to her in the night and offers to restore her speech if she will confess. But she refuses, so the Virgin steals her baby, and her husband's subjects jump to the conclusion that the mother has eaten it. A second child arrives, and the



same incident is repeated. A thorough believer in the old adage of "Try, try, try again," the poor queen presents her husband with number three. This time the Virgin takes her up to heaven and shows her her two other children growing up, as their mother had done, with the angels. The harassed lady is told that they will be restored if she will confess. But still she refuses, so the Virgin steals the third child. One cannot help the thought that a little kindness would have succeeded where so much severity failed. At this repeated disappearance of the royal babies the people clamour so that the heroine is condemned to death. In a Norse variant the Virgin smears her mouth with blood, so that she is taken to be a cannibal. At last she cries out and appeals to her heavenly persecutor, whereupon rain falls and puts out the fire, the Virgin appears, vindicates the unhappy queen, and restores the children, leaving the reader wondering what all the fuss was about, and with his sympathy entirely on the side of the heroine.

In this type the monster of the Bluebeard cycle is replaced by a beneficent (?) goddess. The story just given is closely followed by a Lithuanian tale, while in two variants from Bohemia and Pisa the heroine is preserved from disgrace in one and disgrace and death in the other by persisting in her denial.

### § 5. *The Faithless Sister Type*

In this, another group common in the East, the heroine and the monster change places. It is the faithless sister, or mother, whose curiosity leads to the discovery and release of the hero's mortal enemy, with whom she plots his death. The typical story is Roumanian,<sup>1</sup> in which two children, male and female, are abandoned in a wood by the contrivance of their stepmother. The boy spares the lives of a fox, a wolf, and a bear, each of which gives

<sup>1</sup> "Roumanian Fairy-Tales and Legends" (1881), p. 81.

him a cub in return. With his sister he takes possession of a certain palace. Opening a door therein, he finds a giant bound with three chains, who asks for water. He shuts the door, and forbids his sister to open it; but she disobeys and releases the giant by complying with his request for water. She conspires with him to persuade her brother to leave his three animals at home when he goes hunting. The giant seizes them, locks them in the Forbidden Chamber, and overtakes the hero, whom the monster has nearly vanquished when the beasts hear his voice singing a magic song, and dash out, rescue him, and devour his assailant. This story is amplified in some Arab and Slavonic variants. In one of the latter the helpful animals are enchanted men, while in another the faithless heroine is the hero's mother.

#### § 6. *Marya Morevna Type*

The story of *Marya Morevna*, the Daughter of the Sea, is part of the *Koschei the Deathless* legends, and has already been alluded to in connection with the restoration of life (p. 79). It is given by Ralston,<sup>1</sup> and, as we shall meet with *Koschei* again in connection with the *Separable Soul*, the plot is given here as follows: In accordance with his parents' last commands, Prince Ivan marries his three sisters to the first comers—a Falcon, an Eagle, and a Raven, all of whom arrive in thunder and change into brave youths. A year later Ivan sets out to search for his sisters. He finds an army dead, and learns that it was destroyed by Princess *Marya Morevna*, whom he meets and marries. She, however, cannot settle down, but goes off to war, leaving the prince at home with a certain chamber banned to him. In this closet hangs *Koschei the Deathless*, bound with twelve chains. Ivan finds him, and at his request gives him three bucketsful of water, whereby he is able to burst his chains and fly

<sup>1</sup> W. R. S. Ralston, *l.c.*, p. 85.

off with the Princess Marya Morevna, pursued by her husband. Ivan, in his pursuit, meets his sisters and their husbands one after another, who try to dissuade him from his quest. He will not heed them, but leaves with them his magic tokens—his silver spoon, fork, and snuff-box. He finds his wife and runs off with her, but Koschei catches them and takes away the princess, sparing Ivan for his kindness in giving him the water that set him free. This pursuit, recapture, and forgiveness are repeated a second and a third time; but on the fourth occasion Koschei, evidently feeling that Ivan is becoming monotonous, kills him, chops him up, and puts the pieces in a barrel, which he casts into the sea. By the changed appearance of his life-tokens the brothers-in-law know that Ivan is dead, so they fly to his aid and revive him with the Water of Life. He returns to his wife, and persuades her to ask of Koschei where he got so good a horse. Koschei informs her that he obtained it from the Baba Yaga in return for watching his mares for three days without losing one of them. Marya Morevna communicates this to her husband and steals for him Koschei's handkerchief, the waving of which causes a bridge to spring up over the fiery river which has to be crossed. Ivan sets out, crosses in safety, and, becoming hungry, threatens to eat, first, the chicken of a strange bird; second, a piece of honeycomb; third, a lion cub; but spares them. The bird, bees, and lioness promise to reward him. They help him to watch Baba Yaga's mares, and by the advice of the bees he steals a sorry-looking colt and rides off. Baba Yaga pursues, but Ivan deceives him and casts him into the fiery river. Finally Ivan steals Marya Morevna, and is pursued by the persevering Koschei, who is killed by a kick from Ivan's horse.

In this story Bluebeard assumes the proportions of an epic, and is a type peculiar to the Slavonic race. As we shall see in the next Chapter, Koschei the Deathless is the Slavonic "Punchkin," his analogue among the

Southern Slavs being Steel Pascha, who is unconquerable until overcome by a Delilah. The brothers-in-law in the Marya Morevna story are animal brothers-in-law, and their functions must not be confounded with those of the "grateful beasts," which are here represented by the bird, the bees, and the lioness. The probable significance of the brothers-in-law is Totemistic.

§ 7. *The Teacher and His Scholar Type, and*  
*Scabby John*

This type is connected with the Marya Morevna tale. The theme is the falling of a youth into the power of a magician, the ending being either that he learns to excel the latter in cunning and to outwit him or that he robs him of his magic steed. There are two Icelandic stories which are apparently in process of development each to one of these alternatives. In one a king's prodigal son sells his kingdom for a horse laden with gold and silver and goes in search of adventures. He pays a dead man's debts, and then arrives at a house in which live seven giants, whose protection he wins. The biggest giant gives him all the keys but one, but this he obtains by means of a dough mould. On opening the Forbidden Chamber he discovers a girl hung up by her hair for refusing to marry the big giant. The hero escapes with her; the giants follow, and he kills them. He finds a ship sent by the girl's father and takes her on board; but the captain falls in love with her, and in order to obtain her hand sends the hero adrift in a rudderless boat, which is guided to shore by the dead man whose debts he had paid, and who now advises him to take service as groom to the heroine's father. The result is that the heroine recognizes her rescuer among the grooms, they are married, and the sea-captain is put to death.

In the second story a king's son falls into a giant's power, and is shown by him everything save the kitchen. This he enters during the giant's absence, and finds a big

dog which says, "Choose me, Hringr, king's son." By the dog's advice they go to a king's court, where jealousy of the king's minister makes him perform many things for the king's daughter. The dog saves his life from the minister, and so recovers his own form as a prince who had been enchanted.

In these tales the giants sometimes give the princess or the dog to the hero as a reward of service; more usually he steals them. The type story of the group is found in Greek tradition,<sup>1</sup> "The Teacher and His Scholar," in which a disguised demon promises children to a childless king on condition that he is given the eldest. He offers the king an apple, which the king and queen divide and eat, with the result that they have three sons. The king, regretful of his bargain, builds a glass tower in which to keep them in order to foil the demon; but one day they escape, and the demon pounces upon the hero. He conveys him to his palace in the underworld, which has forty rooms, and gives him thirty-nine keys and a book from which to learn. The hero succeeds in obtaining the fortieth key, and finds a maiden hanging by her hair. She tells him to pretend inability to learn his lesson, to hang her up again and replace the key. He follows her advice, and is flogged by the demon. The maiden then recommends him to learn all the book as fast as possible, but to pretend inability, and to come to her when he has finished his task. He does so, and, by the directions in the book, takes certain magic articles, changes the girl into a mare, and rides off on her back. The demon pursues, but is impeded by the stolen goods which the hero throws behind him (see p. 62), and they escape. The heroine is restored to her original form, they plight their troth, and part. He lodges with an old woman, and makes money by transforming himself into objects which she sells, always retaining something of them so

<sup>1</sup> J. G. von Hahn, "Griechische und Albanesische Märchen" (1864), vol. ii, p. 33.

that he can resume his proper form. Finally, he changes into a pomegranate, which his father plucks. The demon, however, nearly gets it and it breaks, the seeds scattering. The demon changes into a hen and chickens, but the hero becomes a fox and kills them, only to lose his eyes because the hen has eaten two seeds. He returns to his own shape and finds the heroine, who bathes him in a certain brook and so restores his sight.

The reader will recognize in this story, which introduces so many of the features mentioned in previous Chapters, a strong likeness to that of The Second Royal Mendicant of the "Arabian Nights." The variant most like it, however, is "Mohammed the Prudent,"<sup>1</sup> in which the Forbidden Chamber becomes a garden and the prohibition is only inferred. In other versions the Bluebeard type is more nearly approached. In some of these the hero's service consists in ridding his master's head of vermin—an incident common in stories from Mediterranean countries.

There is a sub-type of The Teacher and his Scholar in certain closely allied variants, of which the example is "Scabby John."<sup>2</sup> Other versions are Norse, Greek, Roumanian, and Zanzibar. In this story dead bodies and magical books are found in the Forbidden Chamber.

### § 8. *The Third Royal Mendicant Type*

The story which gives its name to this last group is the well-known one from the "Arabian Nights," in which the wife's fatal curiosity occupies an important place. It is very closely followed by several variants. Taken as a whole, the story is of a very different character from that of the types already considered, being nearest to Marya Morevna. The Forbidden Chamber contains a horse, suggesting the type considered in the section immediately preceding. Throughout the tale the hero is ruled by fate,

<sup>1</sup> Spitta Bey, "Contes Arabes Modernes" (1883), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> P. Sébillot, "Contes Populaires de la Haute Bretagne" (1880-2), vol. iii, p. 74.

and it is not simply curiosity which is the cause of all his troubles. This, Hartland suggests, is due to Mohammedan colouring. Similar predestination occurs in a Tuscan version, the similarity of which to The Third Royal Mendicant is very striking—indeed, it may have been imported from the Moorish conquerors of Southern Italy. Fate also rules in "The Forbidden Doors" in "The Book of Sindabad," a form which approaches a very widespread tale. Another of these stories is told in the "Hitopadesa,"<sup>1</sup> in which a king's son goes to seek a maiden who lies on a couch in the sea, beneath a tree. She sees him and disappears. Leaping into the sea, he reaches the golden city in which she dwells, and marries her. She forbids him to touch the picture of a certain *Vidyādhari*, or fairy. He disobeys, and the resentful figure in the picture kicks him back to his own country. There are numerous variants of this story, in all of which the hero's disobedience results in his being sent back with startling suddenness to his native place or starting point.

Another group of variants introduces the mysterious lapse of time in Fairyland. Examples occur in an Esthonian tale, the Ossian story of the Country of Perpetual Youth, and in Holger the Dane. There is a version of the latter in an Algonquin legend,<sup>2</sup> in which occur a number of Swan Maidens and a forbidden stone. Some of the variants of the Swan-maiden cycle belong also to that of the Forbidden Chamber, as in the "Arabian Nights'" story of Hasan of Bassorah, and a Greek version.<sup>3</sup>

### § 9. *Final Considerations*

Certain other tales are related to the Forbidden Chamber cycle. Such are the story of The King of the Fishes, which connects it with the classical Perseus and

<sup>1</sup> E. Lancereau, "Histoires Traduites du Sanscrit," bk. ii, p. 127.

<sup>2</sup> Leland, *l.c.*, p. 140.

<sup>3</sup> For further information the reader should consult W. F. Kirby's essay on "The Forbidden Doors of the Thousand and One Nights," "Folklore Journal," v. (1887). See also Chapter IX.

Andromeda; a Roumanian tale in which the Forbidden Chamber is the receptacle of an Oracle consigning Psyche to the embraces of a monster; the Spanish tale of "The Black Hand"; and a Bohemian story of a forbidden tree.

In reply to the question whether the Forbidden Chamber can be traced through its earlier stages to its rudimentary form, Hartland suggests that a few stories seem to exhibit traces of this evolution. For example, a Swabian tale of The Robber and The Miller's Twelve Daughters is a half-developed version of Bluebeard, while a Karen story of a man who was possessed of a *Na*, or evil spirit, is an even more primitive form. Among Kampourale's Greek tales is one intermediate between these and the Dead Hand type, and all the Italian variants of Bluebeard represent the heroine's escape as due to her own cunning. The Breton story of Redbeard contains all the essentials except the Forbidden Chamber. The Red Indian story of the Sheldrake Duck mentioned above (p. 124) is one of a Fetish Tabu, and a more primitive form of the Forbidden Chamber; as the type of the story developed, it became modified. Reference has also been made to the Sicilian tale of the Robber with the Magic Head, in which the Separable Soul element occurs. This is a development of thought beyond that of the Sheldrake Duck story; probably the next step is shown in the Dead Hand type.

Hartland traces the development of the Bluebeard cycle from the slaughter of his wife and children by a capricious or cannibal husband to a marriage and murder for previously incurred vengeance, or for purposes of witchcraft, and thence to a murder by a husband for disobedience express or implied. It is at this point that the fatal curiosity comes upon the scene as one method of accounting for the disobedience. When this element has once been introduced it proves of very potent influence, and the story branches off and blossoms in all directions.



CHAPTER VII  
THE SEPARABLE SOUL AND THE  
LIFE-TOKEN

" Know, foolish girl, that we Rakshasas never die. We are not naturally immortal, but our life depends on a secret which no human being can unravel."  
— "Folk-Tales of Bengal."

§ 1. *Punchkin*

I HAVE already referred more than once to what is known as the "Separable Soul" or the "External Soul," a primitive conception of the dwelling apart from the body of the soul, or heart, as the seat of life, in some secret place. It is a belief which follows naturally upon Animism, and is referable to the interpretation of dreams as real events. Indeed, so real are dreams to the savage that I have been told by a friend who had exercised judicial functions among natives that one of his many difficulties as a magistrate was that native witnesses would swear positively, and in all good faith, to the events of a dream as actual occurrences.

The Separable Soul forms the main theme in numerous folk-tales spread over many lands, and, as has been noted in previous Chapters, is sometimes introduced as a subsidiary incident. The type example is the Eastern one of "Punchkin," which has been analysed by Clodd with his usual clarity and skill.<sup>1</sup> The original story is given by Miss Frere,<sup>2</sup> and the following are its essential incidents: A Rajah had seven daughters. His wife died when they were quite children, and he married the widow of his

<sup>1</sup> E. Clodd, "The Philosophy of Punchkin," "Folklore Journal," ii (1884), pp. 228-303.

<sup>2</sup> Miss Frere, "Old Deccan Days" (1868), p. 13.

prime minister. His daughters having treated her unkindly in her hour of need, they ran into the jungle to escape her vengeance. Seven princes out hunting met and married them. Later their husbands went on a hunting expedition, from which they did not return. The youngest princess likewise disappeared by enchantment, and her son, having grown up, started off in search of his mother, father, and uncles. He discovered that the seven princes had been transformed into stone by the Magician Punchkin, who had also captured his mother and confined her in a tower because she had refused to marry him. Recognizing her son by a ring, she pretended agreement to marry Punchkin, provided he would tell her where the secret of his life was hidden. He informed her in the following words: "Hundreds of thousands of miles away is a desolate country covered with thick jungle. In the midst of the jungle grows a circle of palms, in the centre of which stand six chattees full of water, piled one above another. Under the sixth chattee is a small cage, and in it is a little green parrot. On the life of the parrot depends my life, and if the parrot is killed I must die." The palms were surrounded by thousands of genie, who killed all who approached the place. The information was conveyed by the princess to her son, who at once set out on his quest. On his journey he rescued some young eagles from a serpent; in gratitude they carried him through the air to the jungle, and when the genie slept they swooped down. The prince thus obtained the parrot, rolled it in his cloak, and the eagles conveyed him back to Punchkin's palace. When Punchkin was confronted he offered the prince any money he would ask as a price for the parrot. The prince demanded that his father and uncles should be restored to life, and the request was at once complied with. He then insisted that the same should be done for all whom Punchkin had transformed, whereupon the whole garden became alive. The prince then took the parrot and tore off one

wing, and the magician's corresponding arm fell to the ground. The other wing and both legs followed suit with dire effect, and the shrieking Punchkin fell, armless and legless, upon the floor. Finally, the prince wrung the bird's neck, and Punchkin's head twisted, and he died.

In two other stories in the same collection, "Chundrun-Rajah" and "Lodeva Bai," the second of which belongs to the Cinderella cycle, the main incident is the dependence of life upon the retention or removal of a sacred necklace which contains the soul. These tales link up with the Life-Token.

In Miss Stokes's collection<sup>1</sup> are other variants, "Brave Hírálálbásá" and "The Demon and the King's Son." In the former a Rakshasi is induced by a woman to unfold the secret of his life, as follows: "Sixteen miles away is a big tree; round it are tigers, bears, scorpions, and snakes; on the top of the tree is a very great flat snake; in its head is a little cage, in it is a bird, in the bird is my soul." The bird is obtained, and torn to pieces with like result to that in Punchkin. In the second story the demon cannot be killed, because "On the other side of the sea is a great tree; in the tree is a nest; in the nest is a *maind* (starling). If the *maind* is killed, the demon dies. But if its blood falls on the ground, a hundred demons would be born from the blood." The starling is caught, wrapped in a handkerchief, and killed. Two other Separable Soul stories from the East are given by Day.<sup>2</sup> The first is "Life's Secret," in which a Fakir refuses alms from a queen because, being childless, her hands are regarded as ceremonially unclean. He offers her, however, a drug, which, swallowed with the juice of the pomegranate flower, will cause her to give birth to a son.<sup>3</sup> The son was called Dalim Kumar (son

<sup>1</sup> Miss M. Stokes, "Indian Fairy-Tales" (1880).    <sup>2</sup> *I.c.*, pp. 1 and 61.

<sup>3</sup> Some years ago I was informed by the late Col. W. B. Birch that the consumption of the "eyes" left on a pineapple by the removal of the rind was considered in India to ensure fertility.

of the pomegranate), and his mother is told that his life is "bound up in the life of a big *boal* fish which is in your tank, in front of the palace. In the heart of the fish is a small box of wood, in the box is a necklace of gold; that necklace is the life of your son." This story also links the Separable Soul with the Life-Token. In the second tale the Rakshasi's life is bound up thus: "You know yonder tank; there is in the middle of it a *Sphatik-asthambha* (crystal pillar), on the top of which in deep waters are two bees. If any human being can dive into the waters, and bring up to land the two bees from the pillar in one breath, and destroy them so that not a drop of their blood falls to the ground, then we Rakshasas shall certainly die; but if a single drop of blood falls to the ground, then from it will start up a thousand Rakshasas." The hero, Champa Dal, accomplishes this difficult task, and thus brings about the destruction of seven hundred Rakshasas.

It is noteworthy, as Clodd points out, that no corresponding tales exist in Buddhist birth stories, because the idea of the External Soul is foreign to the philosophy taught by the *Jâtákás*.

In the "Arabian Nights'" stories of Princess Parizade, Seyf-el-Mulock, and Bedna-el-Jemál the Separable Soul conception occurs. In one of these the genie's soul is "in the crop of a sparrow, in a little box in another small box in seven chests in a coffer of marble within the verge of this circumambient ocean."

## § 2. *Other Variants of Punchkin*

But stories of the Separable Soul are by no means confined to the East, for Norse, Gaelic, Russian, Transylvanian, Bohemian, Serbian, Tartar, Samoyed, and other variants exist. The most striking of the Norse versions is "The Giant who had no Heart in his Body." This monster transforms six princes and their wives into stone; but Boots, the seventh and only surviving son, avenges

them. He saves the lives of a raven, a salmon, and a wolf. The wolf devours his horse, but compensates him by carrying him on his back to the giant's castle, where the princess is confined. As in *Punchkin*, the latter obtains the secret: Far, far away is a lake, on the lake an island, on the island a church, in the church a well. In the well swims a duck, in the duck is an egg, in the egg is the giant's heart. Boots, assisted by the friendly animals, obtains the egg. By squeezing the latter the monster is made to restore the six princes and their wives, and when the egg is burst the giant bursts also.

In a variant given by Asbjørnsen a troll seizes a princess and tells her that he and all his companions will burst when there passes over them "the grain of sand that lies beneath the ninth tongue in the ninth head of a certain dead dragon." Of course the all-important sand grain is found, and the thing is done.

Of the many Celtic variants the Gaelic one of the Young King of Easaidh Ruadh<sup>1</sup> must be told. The betrothed of this hero was carried off by a giant, and he went in search of her. Assisted by a dog, a falcon, and an otter, he reached the giant's den, and was hidden there by the monster's wife. At his request she obtained her husband's secret. He first informed her that his soul was in the "Bonnach Stone," then that it lay beneath the threshold. Finding that she respected these confidences, he finally revealed the truth to her. "There is a flagstone under the threshold. There is a wether under the flag. There is a duck in the wether's belly, and an egg in the belly of the duck, and it is in the egg that my soul is." The dog pulled out the wether; the duck flew away, but was captured by the falcon; the egg rolled into the sea, but the otter recovered it. It was crushed, and the giant was no more. Another Gaelic variant is "The Sea Maiden,"<sup>2</sup> in which occurs a sea-beast with three

<sup>1</sup> J. F. Campbell, *l.c.*, chap. i, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. i, p. 82.

heads, which cannot be killed until an egg is broken, the said egg being in the mouth of a trout, which is in a hoodie-crow, which is in a hind living on an island in the middle of a loch.

The Russian story of "Koschei the Deathless" occurs in several versions told by Ralston.<sup>1</sup> We have already met with this redoubtable Russian demon in the story of Marya Morevna, in which he meets his death by a kick from Ivan's horse (p. 132). In one version, however, it is Ivan's mother and not his wife whom he stole. Ivan arrives and is hidden by his mother, who asks Koschei where his death is. It is in an egg in a duck, the duck is in a hare, the hare is in a casket, and the casket is under an oak. Ivan, assisted by a pike, a wolf, and a crow, obtains the egg, and kills Koschei by smashing it: in one version he does so by throwing it at his forehead. The latter ending suggests the Norse myth of Balder, who could be killed only when the mistletoe was thrown at him.

Further examples need not be given here in detail. They are to be found in the Bohemian story of "The Sun Horse," and in Greek, Albanian, Tuscan, Hungarian, Tartar, and other folk-tales. The Basque story of "Malbrouk" is another, in which the transformation of the hero into an ant and the assistance of several grateful animals are all fitted in. One Samoyed version is interesting; it tells of a man who had no heart in his body, and could recover it only on restoring to life the mother of the man he had killed. The man said to his wife: "Go to the place where the dead lies; there you will find a purse, in the purse is her soul, shake the purse over her bones, and she will come to life." This was done, and the mother of the Samoyed revived; but she dashed the heart to the ground and the man died.

The conception of the Separable Soul is found also in

<sup>1</sup> W. R. S. Ralston, *l.c.*, p. 100.

the classical story of King Nisus of Megara, who was besieged by Minos. He had a daughter, Sylla, who became enamoured of Minos, and, playing the traitress to her father, pulled out the purple or golden hair which grew on the top of his head, and upon which his life depended. Nisus died in consequence, and Minos obtained possession of the city. So horrified was he, however, at Sylla's unnatural conduct that he caused her to be drowned in the Saronic Gulf. Similar stories relate to Pterelaus, to whom Poseidon gave a golden hair which rendered him immortal, in Greece, Turkey, Sumatra, and among the Eskimo. The Old Testament story of Samson and Delilah belongs to the same series.

Passing to more primitive peoples, the External Soul idea is found among the Basutos, Zulus, and Australians. The latter have a story in which two wicked spirits were slain by the relatives of a man whom they had eaten. Their hearts came out of their bodies, and lay growling upon the ground. Hearing them, the avengers returned, and again speared the bodies. This happened thrice, so two of the avengers hid themselves near by. When the hearts, thinking themselves alone, commenced again to growl, the watchers made a fire and burned them up.<sup>1</sup> Leland gives the Algonquin legend<sup>2</sup> of Glooskap, whose bad brother Malsumsis asked what would kill him. Glooskap, after deceiving him several times, murmured as he sat by a brook: "Nothing but a flowering rush can kill me." This was overheard by the beaver, who told Malsumsis. The latter laughed at him, so the beaver confessed to Glooskap, whereupon the latter took a fern-root, which contained Malsumsis's soul, and, striking the latter as he slept, slew him. As Macculloch remarks<sup>3</sup>: "It is not easy to see why touching a person with his life should cause his death.....Probably the real signi-

<sup>1</sup> B. Spencer and F. J. Gillen, "Northern Tribes of Central Australia" (1904), p. 447.

<sup>2</sup> *l.c.*, p. 16. An Iroquois variant is told at p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> *l.c.*, p. 143.

ficance rests, as in the other tales, on the fact that the life has fallen into an enemy's hands." That is to say, it is a case of sympathetic magic.

Tremearne<sup>1</sup> gives two Hausa stories, one of which runs upon exactly similar lines to the variants already given. In the other the possession of a ring which is the spirit of a city gives power to rule that city.

### § 3. *The Two Brothers*

Enough has been said to demonstrate the universality of the Separable Soul idea in folk-tale; indeed, when one considers that it originated in Animism its widespread nature gives no cause for wonder. As a story its antiquity is known from its occurrence in the Egyptian tale of "The Two Brothers," contained in the d'Orbiney papyrus preserved in the Bibliothèque Imperiale and supposed to belong to the fourteenth century B.C. This tale, the first part of which gives a faithful description of the life of a peasant farmer in ancient Egypt, deals with the adventures of Anpu and Batau, two brothers united in love and labour. One day Batau went to his brother's house to fetch seed corn, and there found Anpu's wife adorning her hair. She, having conceived great affection for him, endeavoured to seduce him; but Batau rejected her overtures and left the house, promising to say nothing of the incident to his brother. But the lady, like Potiphar's wife ("Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned"), told Anpu the exact opposite of the truth, and he, armed with a large grass-cutting knife, started out to kill his brother. As Batau came to the byre to lead his cattle into their stalls the oxen told him that Anpu was waiting behind the door to slay him. Investigation showed him his brother's feet, and he ran off as fast as he could, pursued by the revengeful Anpu. He called upon the Sun-god for aid, and the deity, seeing that

<sup>1</sup> "Hausa Superstitions and Customs," pp. 132, 244.



Batau was gaining, caused a river full of crocodiles to flow between them, so that the brothers faced each the other from the opposite banks. Then Batau explained the truth of the matter to Anpu, telling him that he was departing for the valley of the Acacia, where he would deposit his heart in the cones of a cedar, "so that if the tree be cut his heart would fall to the earth and he must die." He informed him how to find and revivify his heart after seven years, and went away, while Anpu returned home, killed his wife, and threw her to the dogs. In the second part of the story Batau, having passed some years in hunting the wild animals of the desert, married a woman made for him by the gods. The King of Egypt coveted her, however, and, in order to rid herself of the obstacle of a husband, she caused the cedar to be cut down, so that Batau died. Anpu found his brother's heart under a cone and revivified it. Batau assumed the form of an Apis bull, and, gaining access to his wife, now Queen of Egypt, spoke to her. She had the bull slain, but two drops of its blood fell upon the ground, and from them sprang two fine Persea-trees on the palace staircase. One day one of the trees addressed the queen, and that persevering lady caused it to be cut down. But a chip of it flew down her throat, so that she became the mother of a child who was Batau in a new form. "In due time the king flew up to heaven," and Batau became his successor, whereupon he executed the treacherous queen and lived happily with Anpu.

It is interesting to note how in this ancient tale, more than three thousand years old, one recognizes several of the folk-tale incidents which have been so often cited. Not only the External Soul incident is here, but the helpful animals, the blood from which springs a new form of life, and the obstacle which rises up between pursuer and pursued also appear. The story may possibly have supplied the seduction incident in the Old Testa-

ment story of Joseph, which, as has been stated, is a medley of folk-tales.

In discussing the philosophy of these stories Clodd points out that they are not primary. "'Tis a far cry from the primitive man to the first story-teller." Behind them lie relics of primitive ideas concerning the nature of man and his relation to external things—relics, in short, of Animism. They are "the dramatic presentment of that early groping when man was, as his savage representatives are, in a state of 'fog' concerning the nature and relation of what is in the mind to what is outside it; when he has nothing in his slender vocabulary corresponding to the terms 'objective' and 'subjective.'" In that stage of mind represented by the conceptions of Animism there is a belief in one or more entities *in* the body, yet not *of* it, which are able to leave the body during life, and at death to leave it finally. In all probability the belief arose from the interpretation of dreams as real events, to which allusion has more than once been made. To such a mental condition the migration of the soul to an egg, a parrot, or a necklace is easy, for the imagination creates a fellowship not only between man and animal, but also between man and lifeless objects.

#### § 4. *Life-Tokens*

I have already more than once spoken of "Life-Tokens," and, from what has been said, the reader will not be unprepared for the statement that they are closely connected with the idea of a Separable Soul. A life-token is some object connected with the hero or heroine of a fairy-tale, which has been either (1) chosen by him, (2) born with him, or (3) in vital contact with him. The last essential suggests some relation to sympathetic magic. When anything serious happens to the owner of a life-token, or if he die, the token shows it by falling, bleeding, withering, or in some other way. Probably the not uncommon superstition that the fall of a person's picture

betokens his imminent death is a survival of the doctrine. Another common superstition, that ill-fortune ensues upon the breaking of a looking-glass, probably has a similar origin, because, having reflected a person, it must contain some part of him.

Very often the life-token is a tree, as might be expected when the great number of superstitions concerning trees is considered. Trees have always been sacred objects to primitive and even to civilized man. Until quite recent times the belief in spirits which inhabited trees existed. According to John Aubrey, the antiquary (1626–97), in his “Miscellanies,” the felling of an oak was preceded by its groans and shrieks, as of “the genius of the oake lamenting.” Any one who has witnessed the cutting down of a large tree will realize how the noise of cracking and rending which precedes its fall could easily be thus interpreted by the superstitious mind. A survival of such tree superstitions is the belief that the creaking of furniture is an omen of death. Sir James Frazer<sup>1</sup> has given many instances of the belief that human life may be bound up with tree-life. The M'Bengas of West Africa, when two children are born on the same day, plant two trees of a similar kind. If one tree dies or is thrown down, the child whose tree it is will die. In Sierra Leone a shoot of the *malep*-tree is planted at the birth of a child; and there are numerous other primitive examples of this custom. There are still, unless the practice has fallen into desuetude, families in Russia, Germany, England, France, Belgium, and Italy accustomed to plant a tree at the birth of a child, and I believe the custom is pretty general in Switzerland. Byron planted an oak at Newstead which he is said to have regarded as his life-tree, and which is celebrated in his poem :—

Young oak ! when I planted thee deep in the ground,  
I hoped that thy days would be longer than mine.

<sup>1</sup> “The Golden Bough,” vol. iii, p. 391 sq.

The Edgewell Tree, near the Castle of Dalhousie, is another "life-tree"; and there is a tree in the avenue of Cuckfield Hall, Sussex, that is supposed to presage a death in the family when a bough falls—an instance made use of by Harrison Ainsworth in his "Rookwood." It is a very old custom to pass a child through a cleft tree to ensure that his life may be bound up with the plant. This was also done in order that any childish disease, especially rickets, might pass to the tree; and any person destroying the tree would not only endanger the life of the child, but himself take the disease. Among the extinct Tasmanians a tree was usually selected to represent the individual who chose it, and was regarded as his property and held sacred. Similar customs exist among the Ainus, Maoris, Dyaks, Malayans, and various African and other peoples.

Trees figure as life-tokens in many folk-tales. Thus, in a Breton story, a laurel represented an absent twin brother, whose home-keeping brother daily thrust a knife into its stem; if the tree bled, the absent one was dead. There are German, Swabian, Tyrolese, Lettish, and Russian variants.

But life-tokens are not furnished by trees alone; they occur in various forms. It has been seen how the hero in "Marya Morevna" left his silver spoon, fork, and snuff-box with his brothers-in-law as tokens which, by their change, indicated his death. In another of the Koschei stories he leaves some drops of his blood in a glass, and these turn black when he is about to die. In the Kafir story of Sikulume, the hero, when starting off to recover his bird from some cannibals, sticks his assegai in the ground, saying: "If it stands still, you will know I am safe; if it shakes, you will know I am running; if it falls down, you will know I am dead."<sup>1</sup> The Magyars say that the red colour of garnets will pale if the person

<sup>1</sup> G. M. Theal, "Kafir Folklore," n.d., p. 77.

wearing them be out of health ; and in many oriental stories a man's life depends on some necklace or talisman which he wears, as in "Chundrun Rajah" and "Lodeva Bai," mentioned above (p. 140). In a Kashmir tale a woman wears a necklace which contains the secret of her life and is a charm against danger and sickness.<sup>1</sup> Between this story and that of Dalim Kumar and his External Soul, already given (p. 140), is but a step. The Déné Hare-Skin Indians have a tale, related by Petitot,<sup>2</sup> of their mythical devil Etwa-éké, whose life-token was a stone hatchet. When he was slain and burned the hatchet came out of the ashes and brought him back to life, so that so long as his hatchet remained intact he was immortal. Possibly it was from the conception of the life-token that the primitive custom arose of breaking a man's personal belongings before they were buried with him.

A burning brand or a lighted candle may also be a life-token. Thus the life of Meleager depended upon a burning brand pointed out by the Fates. His mother Althæa extinguished it and hid it in a chest ; but later, enraged at the death of her brothers at his hand, she threw the brand on the fire, and so caused his death. In candles were bound up the lives of the Spanish Rose Queen and her sisters ; when they were extinguished they died.

The subject of life-tokens has been minutely analysed by Hartland in his "Legend of Perseus."<sup>3</sup> In many of the Perseus tales a woman gives birth to children after eating a certain fish, and the fish's blood, scales, or bones are planted and produce bushes which are their life-tokens, and wither when they are in danger. Examples of life-tokens could easily be multiplied, but enough have been given to show the intimate connection between them and the doctrine of the Separable Soul. The connecting link,

<sup>1</sup> J. H. Knowles, "Folk-Tales of Kashmir" (1888), p. 467.

<sup>2</sup> *I.c.*, p. 218.

<sup>3</sup> 3 vols. (1894-96).

as Macculloch says,<sup>1</sup> "is found in tales where a person's life is wrapped up in the existence of some object, talisman, animal, lighted candle, etc. This idea and that of the life-token are, in fact, extensions of the Separable Soul conception, though they may also be dependent on the belief in sympathetic magic, by which whatever is done to a part is equally done to the whole, though separated from it, and *vice versâ*."

<sup>1</sup> *L.c.*, p. 118.

## CHAPTER VIII

### TOM TIT TOT AND RUMPELSTILTSKEN

"Who steals my purse steals trash ; 'tis something, nothing ;  
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands ;  
But he that filches from me my good name  
Robs me of that which not enriches him,  
And makes me poor indeed," —"Othello."

#### § 1. *The Name-Tabu Cycle*

To the student of folklore there is a deeper meaning suggested by Iago's words than was intended by Shakespeare. There is, moreover, matter for dissent, since to obtain a man's name means to the primitive mind the possession of something which, being a part of him, gives power over him, and may be used for the working of very potent magic. Hence the widespread tabu on names mentioned in Chapter IV. This tabu is introduced many times in folk-tale, as in the prohibition laid upon a husband not to speak nor to communicate his wife's name, and *vice versa*, and is responsible for the large cycle of stories of which Rumpelstiltsken and Tom Tit Tot are the best known types. This cycle has been exhaustively analysed by Clodd,<sup>1</sup> the result of whose researches will be used in this Chapter.

It is interesting to note that several variants of this Name-Tabu cycle belong to the British Isles, survivals of a forgotten and remote period in our ancestry. The most noteworthy of these are "Whuppity Stoorie" (Annandale), "Duffy and the Devil" (Cornwall), "Tom Tit Tot" (Norfolk), "Habetrot" (The Border), and "The Idle Girl and her Aunts" (Ireland). The value of these stories, as

<sup>1</sup> E. Clodd, "The Philosophy of Punchkin," "Folklore Journal," vii (1889), pp. 135-63. "Tom Tit Tot" (1898).

also of "Rashin Coatie" and "Cap o' Rushes," as Clodd remarks, "lies in their being almost certainly derived from oral transmission through uncultured peasants."

Paying special attention to British variants, I commence with

§ 2. *Tom Tit Tot*

This story, as quoted by Clodd from an old number of the "Ipswich Journal" in the picturesque East Anglian dialect, is as follows:—

"Well, once upon a time there were a woman, and she baked five pies. And when they came out of the oven they was that overbaked, the crust were too hard to eat. So she says to her darter—'Maw'r,'<sup>1</sup> says she, 'put you them there pies on the shelf an' leave 'em there a little, an' they'll come agin'—she meant, you know, the crust 'ud get soft.

"But the gal, she says to herself, 'Well, if they'll come agin, I'll ate 'em now.' And she set to work and ate 'em all, first and last.

"Well, come supper time the woman she said, 'Goo you and git one o' them there pies. I daresay they've come agin now.' The gal she went an' she looked, and there warn't nothin' but the dishes. So back she come, and says she, 'Noo, they ain't come agin.' 'Not none on 'em?' says the mother. 'Not none on 'em,' says she. 'Well, come agin or not come agin,' says the woman, 'I'll ha' one for supper.' 'But you can't, if they ain't come,' says the gal. 'But I can,' says she. 'Goo you, and bring the best of 'em.' 'Best or worst,' says the gal, 'Iv'e ate 'em all, and you can't ha' one till that's come agin.'

"Well, the woman she were wholly bate, and she took her spinnin' to the door to spin, and as she span she sang—

My darter ha' ate five, five pies to-day—  
My darter ha' ate five, five pies to-day.

<sup>1</sup> The East Anglian word "Mawther" means "daughter," and is derived from the same root as "maid."



"The king he were a comin' down the street an' he hard her sing, but what she sang he couldn't hare, so he stopped and said—'What were that you was a singun of, maw'r?' The woman, she were ashamed to let him hare what her darter had been a doin', so she sang, 'stids o' that—

My darter ha' spun five, five skeins to-day—  
My darter ha' spun five, five skeins to-day.

'S'ars o' mine!' said the king, 'I never heerd tell of any one as could do that.'

"Then he said: 'Look you here, I want a wife, and I'll marry your darter. But look you here,' says he, 'leven months out o' the year she shall have all the vittles she likes to eat, and all the gownds she likes to git, and all the cumpny she likes to hev; but the last month o' the year she'll ha' to spin five skeins iv'ry day, and if she doon't, I shall kill her.' 'All right,' says the woman: for she thowt what a grand marriage that was. And as for them five skeins, when te come tew, there'd be plenty o' ways of gettin' out of it, and likeliest, he'd ha' forgot about it.

"Well, so they was married. An' for 'leven months the gal had all the vittles she liked to ate, an' all the gownds she liked to git, an' all the cumpny she liked to hev. But when the time was gittin' oover, she began to think about them there skeins an' to wonder if he had 'em in mind. But not one word did he say about 'em, and she wholly thowt he'd forgot 'em.

"Howsivir, the last day o' the last month, he takes her to a room she'd niver set eyes on afore. There worn't nothin' in it but a spinnin' wheel an' a stool. An', says he, 'Now, me dear, hare yow'll be shut in to-morrow with some vittles an' some flax, an' if you hain't spun five skeins by the night, yar hid'll goo off.' An' awa' he went about his business.

"Well, she were that frightened. She'd allus been such a gatless mawther, that she didn't se much as know how to spin, an' what were she to dew to-morrer, with no

one to come nigh to help her. She sat down on a stool in the kitchen, and lork! how she did cry!

"Howsivir, all on a sudden she hard a sort of a knockin' low down on the door. She upped and oped it, an' what should she see but a small little black thing with a long tail, that looked up at her right kewrious, an' that said'— 'What are yew a cryin' for?' 'Wha's that to you?' says she. 'Never yew mind,' that said, 'but tell me what you're a cryin' for.' 'That won't dew me noo good if I dew,' says she. 'Yew doon't know that,' that said, an' twirled that's tail round. 'Well,' says she, 'that oon't dew no harm, if that doon't dew no good,' an' she upped an' told about the pies an' the skeins, an' everything. 'This is what I'll dew,' says the little black thing: 'I'll come to yar winder iv'ry mornin' an' take the flax, an' bring it spun at night.' 'What's your pay?', says she. That looked out o' the corners o' that's eyes, and that said: 'I'll give you three guesses every night to guess my name, an' if yew hain't guessed it afore the month's up, yew shall be mine.' Well, she thowt she'd be sure to guess that's name afore the month was up. 'All right,' says she; 'I agree.' 'All right,' that says, an' lork! how that twirled that's tail.

"Well, the next day, har husband he took her inter the room, an' there was the flax an' the day's vittles. 'Now, there's the flax,' says he, 'an' if that ain't spun up this night off goo yar hid.' An' then he went out an' locked the door.

"He'd hardly goon, when there was a knockin' agin the winder. She upped and oped it, an' there sure enough was the little oo'd thing a settin' on the ledge. 'Where's the flax?', says he. 'Here te be,' says she. An' she gonned it to that.

"Well, come the evenin', a knockin' come agin to the winder. She upped an' she oped it, an' there were the

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that Tom Tit Tot can be referred to only as "that," because his name is not known until the end.

little oo'd thing, with five skeins of flax on his arm. 'Here te be,' says he, an' he gonned it to her. 'Now, what's my name?', says he. 'What, is that Bill?', says she. 'Noo, that ain't,' says he. An' he twirled his tail. 'Is that Ned?' says she. 'Noo, that ain't,' says he. An' he twirled his tail. 'Well, is that Mark?' says she. 'Noo, that ain't,' says he. An' he twirled his tail harder, an' awa' he flew.

"Well, when har husban' he come in: there was the five skeins riddy for him. 'I see I shorn't hev fer to kill you to-night, me dare,' says he. 'Yew'll hev yar vittles and yar flax in the mornin',' says he, an' away he goes.

"Well, ivery day the flax an' the vittles, they was browt, an' ivery day that there little black impet used for to come mornin's an' evenin's. An' all the day the mawther she set a tryin' fur to think of names to say to it when te come at night. But she nivir hot on the right one. An' as that got to-warts the ind o' the month, the impet that began to look soo maliceful, an' that twirled that's tail faster an' faster each time she gave a guess.

"At last te come to the last day but one. The impet that come at night along o' the five skeins, an' that said, 'What, hain't yew got my name yet?' 'Is that Nicodemus?', says she. 'Noo, t'ain't,' that says. 'Is that Sammle?', says she. 'Noo, t'ain't,' that says. 'A-well, is that Methusalem?', says she. 'Noo, t'ain't that norther,' he says. Then that looks at her with that's eyes like a cool o' fire, an' that says, 'Woman, there's only to-morrer night, an' then yar'll be mine!' An' awa' te flew.

"Well, she felt that horrud. Howsomediver, she hard the king a coming along the passage. In he came, an' when he see the five skeins, he says, says he—'Well, me dare,' says he, 'I don't see but what yew'll ha' your skeins ready to-morrer night as well, an' as I reckon I shorn't ha' to kill you, I'll ha' supper in here to-night.'

So they brought supper, an' another stool for him, and down the tew they sat.

"Well, he hadn't eat but a mouthful or so, when he stops and begins to laugh. 'What is it?', says she. 'A-why,' says he, 'I was out a' huntin' to-day, an' I got away to a place in the wood I'd never seen afore. An' there was an old chalk pit. An' I heerd a sort of a hummin', kind o'. So I got off my hobby, an' I went right quiet to the pit, an' I looked down. Well, what should be there but the funniest little black thing yew iver set eyes on. An' what was that a dewin' on, but that had a little spinnin' wheel, an' that were a spinnin' wonnerful fast, an' a twirlin' that's tail. An' as that span, that sang—

'Nimmy nimmy not,  
My name's Tom Tit Tot.'

Well, when the mawther heerd this, she fared as if she could ha' jumped outer her skin for joy, but she di'n't say a word.

"Next day, that there little thing looked so malicious when he came for the flax. An' when night came, she heerd that a knockin' agin the winder panes. She oped the winder, an' that came right in on the ledge. That were grinnin' from are to are, an' Oo! that's tail were twirlin' round so fast. 'What's my name?', that says, as that gonned her the skeins. 'Is that Solomon?' she says, pretendin' to be afeard. 'Noo, t'ain't,' that says, an' that come fudder inter the room. 'Well, is that Zebedee?' says she again. 'Noo, t'ain't,' says the impet. An' then that laughed and twirled that's tail till yew cou'n't hardly see it.

"'Take time, woman,' that says; 'next guess, an' you're mine.' An' that stretched out that's black hands at her. Well, she backed a step or two, an' she looked at it, an' then she laughed out, an' says she, a pointin' of her finger at it—

'Nimmy nimmy not,  
Yar name's Tom Tit Tot.'

Well, when that hard her, that shruck awful an' awa' that flew into the dark, an' she niver saw it noo more."

Of the British variants of this story, the Scots "Whuppity Stoorie"<sup>1</sup> tells of a man who went to a fair and never came back, leaving his wife with a son and a sow about to farrow. Lamenting the fact that the sow was dying, there came an old woman dressed all in green, who asked her what she would give her to cure the animal. The woman desperately promised to give her anything she liked, and the sow was cured. The fairy then demanded the woman's son, but said that, by the fairy law, she could not do so until the third day, and then only if the mother failed to tell her her name. For two days the poor widow wandered about until, coming to an old quarry, she heard a spinning wheel and saw the green fairy, who sang:—

Little kens our guid dame at hame  
That Whuppity Stoorie is my name.

As in Tom Tit Tot, the woman could not resist a joke, and begged the fairy to take the sow and leave the boy, and, when this request was summarily rejected, offered herself. The fairy replied: "The deil's in the daft jade, wha' in a' the earthly warld wad ever meddle wi' the likes o' thee?" Whereupon, curtseying, the woman said: "I might hae had the wit to ken that the likes o' me is na fit to tie the warst shoe-strings o' the heich and mighty princess, Whuppity Stoorie," with startling result. Another version, from the Border, which introduces helpful and kindly fairies, is "Habetrot,"<sup>2</sup> which has the same motif, and the fairy is heard to say: "Little kens the wee lassie on the brae-head that ma name's Habetrot."

In the Cornish tale of "Duffy and the Devil" the heroine incautiously remarks, "The Devil can spin and

<sup>1</sup> E. Chambers, "Popular Rhymes of Scotland" (1841), p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> W. Henderson, "Folklore of the Northern Counties" (1879), p. 258.

knit for the squire, for what I care," and the Evil One gives her power to fulfil any wish for three years, after which she is his, unless she can tell his name. At the psychological moment her husband describes to her how he heard the Devil singing:—

Duffy, my lady, you'll never know—what?  
That my name is Terrytop, Terrytop-top.

"The Heir of Ystrad" is one of several Welsh stories which are closely allied in detail, and is specially interesting as introducing the effect of iron (see p. 96). A young heir of Ystrad went in search of adventures to the banks of the Gwyrfaï stream that issues from Quellyn's lake. At nightfall he concealed himself behind a bush near the place where the fairies known as the "Twylywyth Teg," or "Folk of the Red Coat," held their revels. Among them he saw a maiden, with whom he fell in love, and he sprang suddenly into the fairy circle and seized her, her companions immediately vanishing. He took her home, and did his utmost to make her happy. One thing, however, he could not prevail upon her to do, and that was to tell her name. One evening, while driving two of his cows to the meadow, he came to the spot where he had seized his fairy. Hiding himself as before, he again saw the Red-coated Folk, and heard them saying that on their last visit a mortal had carried off their sister Penelope. He ran home full of joy and called the fairy by her name, to her great distress. After long urging she consented to marry him, provided that if ever he struck her with iron she should be free to leave him. They lived happily for some years, but one day, while they tried to catch a horse, he threw the bridle at the animal and by accident it struck his wife, who at once vanished.

In another Welsh variant a farmer's wife at Llaniestyn often lent her baking utensils to a fairy who, when she returned them, always gave her a loaf of bread. Once the fairy requested her to lend her spinning-wheel,

whereupon the woman asked her name, which was refused. She tracked the fairy, watched her spinning, and heard her sing :—

Little does she know  
That Trwtyn-Tratyn  
Is my name.

Clodd points out that "Trwtyn-Tratyn" is not Welsh, and that in an Irish variant the fairy sings :—

Little does my lady wot  
That my name is Trit a Trot.

And he suggests that these may have some bearing on the origin of the alliterative name "Tom Tit Tot." Alliteration is also to be noted in the Swedish demon's name of "Titteli-Ture" and the French "Ricdin-Ricdon."

### § 3. *Foreign Variants*

Clodd refers, in the useful bibliography attached to his volume on Tom Tit Tot, to a number of variants from Lower Austria, the Tyrol, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Iceland, Mongolia, Russia, Spain, and Sweden. To these may be added one from Nigeria.<sup>1</sup> This story must be taken first, as being probably the more primitive. It is called "Why the Hippopotamus Lives in the Water," and is as follows<sup>2</sup>:—

Many years ago the hippopotamus, whose name was Isantim, was one of the biggest things on the land, second only to the elephant. He was very fond of his seven fat wives. Now and then he used to give a big feast to the people, but a curious thing was that, although every one knew the hippo, no one, except his seven wives, knew his name.

At one of the feasts, just as the people were about to sit down, the hippo said : "You have come to feed at my table, but none of you know my name. If you cannot

<sup>1</sup> E. Dayrell, "Folk-Stories from Southern Nigeria" (1910), No. xxii, p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> I give it in a slightly abridged form.

tell my name, you shall all of you go away without your dinner."

As they could not guess his name, they had to go away and leave all the food. But before they left the tortoise asked the hippo what he would do if he told him his name at the next feast. The hippo replied that he would be so ashamed of himself that he and his whole family would leave the land and dwell for the future in the water.

Now the tortoise knew that every morning and evening the hippo and his seven wives went down to the river to wash and drink, so one day when they had gone down according to custom the tortoise made a small hole in the middle of the path and waited hidden. The hippo and his wives returned, the former leading as usual. But two of the wives were some way behind, so the tortoise came from his hiding place and half-buried himself in the hole he had dug, leaving the greater part of his shell exposed. When the lagging wives came up the first struck her foot against the tortoise shell and immediately called out: "Oh! Isantim, my husband, I have hurt my foot." Whereat the tortoise went home very pleased, because he had found out the hippo's name.

At the next feast the hippo made the same condition, so the tortoise got up and said: "You promise you will not kill me if I tell you your name?" And the hippo promised. The tortoise then shouted out as loud as he was able, "Your name is Isantim," at which everybody cheered and sat down to dinner.

When the feast was over, the hippo, with his seven wives, in accordance with his promise, went down to the river, and they have lived in the water ever since; and although they come on shore to feed at night, you never find a hippo on the land in the daytime.

One may fairly assume that in this story a tabu is implied against the hippo's wives divulging their husband's name.



The foreign variant best known in England is that of "Rumpelstiltsken," introduced by the Brothers Grimm. This closely follows in incident Tom Tit Tot, and the dwarf is heard to sing:—

Merrily the feast I'll make;  
To-day I'll brew, to-morrow bake;  
Next day I will a stranger bring.  
Little does my lady dream  
Rumpelstiltsken is my namo.

For the names of the other stories the reader is referred to the bibliography given by Clodd. One or two of these variants may, however, be mentioned. In a Swedish story the demon's name is the alliterative one of "Titteli-Ture." In the Magyar "The Lazy Spinning Girl who became a Queen" a girl was daily scolded by her mother for her indolence. A prince passing by asked what was the matter, and the mother, lying as in Tom Tit Tot, said that her daughter spun so much that she was always asking for more. The prince took her away, promising marriage if she span a shed full of flax a month. After three weeks of bemoaning her fate, she was helped by a little man on the condition that if she did not discover his name by the end of the week he should carry her off. During the week she learned from a servant that she had seen a little man in a wood spinning, and singing:—

My name is Dancing Vargaluska,  
My wife will be good Spinster Sue!

At the end of the week the little man brought the flax spun, and was ready to carry off his victim, when she cried, "If I am not mistaken, your name is Dancing Vargaluska," whereupon he rushed away in a fury. The prince married the girl, and to the wedding came three very ugly women. The first had a broad foot, the second a thickened lip, and the third a broad thumb. Learning that these deformities arose from turning the spinning wheel, moistening the thread, and twisting it, the bridegroom forbade his wife ever to touch a wheel again. This

sequel is found also in Grimm's story of "The Three Spinning Fairies," Dasent's<sup>1</sup> "Three Aunts," the Portuguese tale of "The Aunts," the Tuscan "The Beautiful Glutton," and "The Three Little Crows, Each with Something Big."<sup>2</sup> According to Macculloch,<sup>3</sup> "The little old man may be explained as a reminiscence of the clever but hostile race who afterwards helped to mould the fairy superstition—women and child stealers. The three old women are the usual 'fairy godmothers,' fates, three in number, who appear in so many tales, and take us back to the three *Deæ Matres* of earlier Teutonic and Celtic religion."

In a Basque story, "The Pretty but Idle Girl,"<sup>4</sup> the usual opening incidents occur, but a witch takes the place of the demon, and her bargain is that the heroine must remember her name, Marie Kirikitoun, for a year and a day. She forgets it, but an old woman tells her that she has seen the witch leaping and bounding from one ditch to another, and singing all the time—

Houpa, houpa, Marie Kirikitoun, nobody will remember  
my name!

The bride rewards her informant, and gets the best of the witch. A witch, Gilitrutt by name, occurs also in an Icelandic version.

In another variant from the Tyrol,<sup>5</sup> a count trespasses when hunting on the lands of a dwarf with fiery red eyes and long beard, who tells him that he must either die or surrender his wife. As a concession to his pleading, the dwarf agrees that if the countess cannot find out his name within a month she is to be his, and he fixes a rendezvous. The wife is allowed nine guesses—three a day. The first day she tries "Janne," "Fichte," and "Fohre"; the second "Hafer," "Plenten," and "Turken." On the

<sup>1</sup> G. W. Dasent, *l.c.*    <sup>2</sup> B. Thorpe, *l.c.*, p. 170.    <sup>3</sup> *l.c.*, p. 28, *note*.

<sup>4</sup> W. Webster, *l.c.*, p. 56.

<sup>5</sup> I and J. Zingerle, "Tirolo Kinder-und Hausmärchen" (1852), pp. 225-32.

third day the dwarf is missing at the rendezvous, and the countess wanders to a valley, where she finds a tiny house. Peeping in at the window, she sees the dwarf hopping about and singing his name. She hurries back to the appointed place, and awaits him there; when he comes she makes the usual pretence at guessing, and tries first "Pur," then "Ziege," and finally "Purzinigele," when the dwarf rages, and disappears for good.

Finally, in "The Use of Magic Language,"<sup>1</sup> a prince is sent to gain knowledge, and takes with him his friend, the son of his father's prime minister. This companion becomes jealous, and on their return journey entices him into a forest and murders him. As the prince dies he says "Abaraschika." The assassin tells the king that his victim fell sick, and died uttering the mysterious word. All the learned men in the kingdom are told that they must discover the meaning of the word or be put to death. A student tells the worried wiseacres how, sleeping under a tree, he heard a bird telling her young not to cry for food but to be patient, because next day the king would slay a thousand men for their inability to interpret the word "Abaraschika," the meaning of which was: "My bosom friend hath enticed me into a thick grove, and hath taken away my life." The wise men report this to the king, who executes the treacherous friend.

#### § 4. *General Considerations*

The leading motif of the Tom Tit Tot series is, like that of the Forbidden Chamber, a Tabu. In the latter it is, as has been shown, a tabu probably of a religious nature; in the stories under discussion the tabu belongs rather to the practice of magic—the "magic in names." To discuss fully the whole subject of name-magic would need a volume, and the task has already been admirably performed by Sir James Frazer in his "Golden Bough,"

<sup>1</sup> R. H. Busk, "Sagas from the Far East" (1873), p. 157.

and by Clodd in his "Magic in Names." All that is required here, therefore, is to indicate the salient facts of a subject of great interest.

The question of Tabu has already been dealt with in Chapter IV, and, although the name-tabu is there mentioned, I have reserved its more special consideration until now. "To the civilized man," says Clodd,<sup>1</sup> "his name is only a necessary label; to the savage it is an integral part of himself. He believes that to disclose it is to put its owner in the power of another, whereby magic can be wrought on the named." But the civilized child sometimes exhibits traces of this primitive dislike; and I remember how, when at school some forty or more years ago, the younger boys often showed a distaste for revealing their Christian names, and that on one occasion, when a master ordered his class to recite them in turn, there was some consternation and not a little hesitation in obeying the order. It has occurred to me that this hesitation may possibly be regarded as one of our many "savage survivals." A further instance will be mentioned later. This primitive belief takes its origin in the difficulty of appreciating the difference between symbols and realities; a difficulty which is at the root of fetishism, idol worship, and magic generally, and was of especial potency when life was one great struggle with the unknown, and, therefore, the fearful. "Language, from the simple phrases of common life to the highest abstract terms, rests on the concrete";<sup>2</sup> and this is apparent in many of our words in common use. Thus "apprehend" means "to seize" or "lay hold of," while "disaster," "consideration," and "lunatic" owe their origin to the primitive belief in the influence of the stars upon man. Words are things to the primitive mind, and a prescription written in ink and then washed off is as potent when the washings are swallowed as if the prescrip-

<sup>1</sup> "Magic in Names," p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> Clodd, *l.c.*, p. 38.

tion had been made up in orthodox pharmaceutical fashion.

The history of mankind abounds in examples of the belief in the magic potency of names as an integral part of persons. Primitive man not only applied the idea to himself, but to his fellow-men, his relatives, his dead, and his gods and demons. To utter the name of a dead man, a god, or a demon, was to invoke him ("invoke" is another instance of the embalment of primitive idea in a word, for it means literally "to call for earnestly"). Civilized people still speak of a dead man as "the deceased," and many savages will not utter his name at all. The magic of names is found in every religious system. In the Old Testament, for example, the name of Yahweh is not to be pronounced save under extraordinary circumstances, and there is in the story of Jacob at the Ford of Jabbok (Genesis, xxxii, 24-32) a clear instance of name-magic.<sup>1</sup> The commandment says: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God *in vain*"—"in vain" meaning for magic purposes. The Egyptian God Ra had a secret name, which Isis obtained,<sup>2</sup> and "the name of the guardian deity of Rome was kept a profound secret lest the enemies of the republic should lure him away."<sup>3</sup> The power of the name for working magic has recently been made the subject of a curious film, "The Golem," stated to be based upon ancient Hebrew legend, in which the attachment of a written name animates a huge clay figure. We have already seen that, in fairy-tale, puppets can be made to live by means of blood, etc. (p. 86); and the name of a god, demon, or man, being as much a part of him as his blood, saliva, nail parings, or the clothes he wears, can answer the same purpose.

Among modern savages the native Australians, as did

<sup>1</sup> See the author's "Story of the Bible," p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> Frazer, "Golden Bough," 2nd edn., vol. i, p. 443.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 446.

also the extinct Tasmanians, show great dislike at the mention of their names, and among the former the name is used to encompass the owner's death by magic. Similar beliefs exist among the natives of West Africa, British Guiana, North and South America, the Malay Peninsula, and India. Even among the peasants of civilized countries to-day a dislike exists to telling their names, and Clodd instances an experience told him by a lady who was sketching in North Wales. She found that not one of five children who were watching her would tell their names.<sup>1</sup> Similar dislike exists in the North East of Scotland and among the Irish peasantry. According to Boas, among the Kwakiutt Indians a name may be temporarily surrendered as security for a loan—a practice which appears to be akin to the signature upon a deed, I O U, or cheque, save that in the latter the magic which is used with it on default is worked through the medium of a court of law.

There is no necessity to multiply instances. The magic in names is, as has been seen (p. 86), further reflected in primitive customs in the solemnization of blood-brotherhood (as in the famous case of Captain Cook), in the prohibition to utter the name of a wife or a husband, implied in the Nigerian story of the Hippopotamus above related, as well as in the Tom Tit Tot cycle.

<sup>1</sup> *l.c.*, p. 42, *note*.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE SWAN-MAIDENS

"He put the hawthorn twigs apart,  
And yet saw no more wondrous thing  
Than seven white swans, who on wide wing  
Went circling round, till one by one  
They dropped the dewy grass upon.

\* \* \* \*

But when he next looked o'er the grass,  
Seven swan-skins lay anigh his hand,  
And near by on the grass did stand  
Seven white-skinned damsels, wrought so fair  
That John must sit and tremble there,  
And flush blood-red, and cast his eyes  
Down on the ground in shamefast wise."

—MORRIS ("The Earthly Paradise").

#### § 1. *Introductory*

At the conclusion of Chapter VI I pointed out that there belonged to the Forbidden Chamber stories certain tales which were variants of the Swan-maiden cycle, and the famous history of Hasan of Bassorah was cited as an example. Some attention must now be devoted to this Swan-maiden cycle, which deals mainly with tabu. It contains some of the most beautiful of all fairy-tales, and is one of the most universal of story cycles. The general idea of these stories is that the hero observes some birds—swans, geese, ducks, doves, pigeons, etc.—who fly to a lake and, removing their feather dresses, become maidens of surpassing beauty. By taking possession of the dress of one of them the hero forces her to become his wife; but, after some length of time, she recovers her dress and flies away, usually never to return, but sometimes to be recovered by her husband. In some variants animals are substituted for birds, in others mermaids, while in yet others all trace of animal transformation is lost, and

it is by annexing her garment that the hero obtains power over the maiden. The motif thus outlined is found as the central incident in a number of stories, or is introduced as part of a longer tale. As will be seen in the course of this Chapter, the swan-maiden motif is met with in the folk-tales of all countries, Europe, Asia, Africa, and Melanesia; and there are numerous British variants from Wales, Scotland, Ireland, and the West of England. Great interest attaches to them because they introduce, in various ways, a tabu, the most important of which is a sexual one.

In his "Science of Fairy-Tales" Hartland has devoted two chapters to the Swan-maiden stories, which he has divided into six types. This classification I shall endeavour to follow.

### § 2. *The Hasan of Bassorah Type*

The story of Hasan of Bassorah belongs also to the Forbidden Chamber cycle, and deals with a worthless youth who is kidnapped by the magician under whose influence he has fallen. His captor takes him a long journey to a high mountain, and there encloses him, together with a knife, three cakes, and a bottle of water, in a skin. A vulture seizes this package, and thus he is transported to the summit of the mountain, where, acting upon his master's instructions, Hasan slits the skin, leaps out, picks up certain bundles of wood which are required by the magician for purposes of sorcery, and throws them down to him. The callous magician then leaves him to his fate. Hasan, however, succeeds in reaching a palace in which live seven maidens, with whom he lives upon terms of Platonic affection. After some time his companions are summoned away by their father for two months, and, entrusting Hasan with their keys during their absence, they prohibit him from opening a certain door. As usual, he disobeys, and finds a pavilion containing a basin full of water. To this pavilion come ten



birds, who throw off their feathers to change into ten virgins of extraordinary beauty who bathe in the basin. The chief of them is the daughter of the king of the Genii, and with her Hasan falls deeply in love. When the seven friendly maidens rejoin him they counsel him to watch for the return of the birds, and to possess himself of the feather garment of the chosen one. He does so, and as the virgin cannot return without her plumage he thus compels her to become his wife. He takes her to Baghdad, where, in course of time, she presents him with two sons. The happy couple live with Hasan's mother—an arrangement usually unfortunate even in modern times—and to her Hasan gives charge of the feather garment. During a short absence of her husband the wife prevails upon her mother-in-law to surrender the garment, which she immediately puts on and flies off to the Islands of Wák, taking the children with her and leaving a message that, if he loves her, her husband can come there to look for her. This archipelago of Wák is composed of seven islands inhabited by a host of virgin girls, the inner isles being occupied by a terrible tribe of Genii, whose king is the father of Hasan's wife. The islands can be reached only by crossing seven wadys, seven seas, and seven great mountains. By the help of various horrific monarchs served by demons Hasan succeeds in passing the Land of Birds, the Land of Wild Beasts, the Country of the Enchanters, and the Land of the Genii, to reach finally the Islands of Wák, where he falls into the power of his wife's terrible eldest sister. This amiable person tortures the unlucky hero, but, by means of a cap of invisibility and a rod which gives authority over the seven tribes of Genii, he obtains his wife. Her sister pursues them with an army of Genii, which Hasan overcomes by means of the rod of power. His wife begs her sister's life, reconciles her to her husband, and finally returns with him to Baghdad.

It is to be noted that in this story the particular kind

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of bird in whose guise the maiden appears is not specified. This is the case also in an Eskimo variant. In European versions, however, it is usually a swan, as in Swedish, Transylvanian (in which, by the way, a forbidden door is also introduced), Russian, Hessian, and Irish stories. In the last named Ængus, son of Dagda, falls in love, through a dream, with a maiden named Caer ib Ormaith, who appears one year in swan-shape and the next year in human form. When she marries Ængus she seems to have continued this dimorphic way of living. In a Finnish version the bird is a goose. In some stories the maidens take the semblance of ducks; in Bohemia, South Smaland, the "Arabian Nights" story of Janshah, and some other versions, they are doves. Pigeons also figure. As a matter of fact, the species of bird introduced is a minor point, the preference for swans being merely due to their superior beauty and grace, probably with the additional influence of locality.

In a story from the Arawáks of Guiana a hunter catches a vulture who was the daughter of the ruler of a race dwelling above the sky, where they lived in human shape. The captured bird falls in love with the hunter, and, putting off her feathers, shows herself as a lovely girl. She marries him, carries him above the clouds, and, with some difficulty, persuades her family to accept him. They live happily until a desire to visit his old mother causes the wife's relatives to expel him, and they place him on the top of a very tall tree, the trunk of which is beset with great prickles. In answer to his appeal to all the living animals around, spiders assist him by spinning cords, while birds ease his passage to the earth. He spends several years in endeavours to regain his wife, and succeeds in overcoming her family, who seek to kill him. Finally, the birds—the ordinary birds, not the vultures—form a strong air-force, and, under his command, fight for him. He is, however, killed by his own son, born after the father's expulsion

from the realms above the clouds, and educated without knowledge of his sire. In the grand finale the House of the Royal Vultures is destroyed by fire, and the birds, surrounded and unable to fly, fight and die in human form.

A Pomeranian story<sup>1</sup> tells of a huntsman who sees a girl bathing in a pool at the foot of the Hühnerberg and picks up her clothes, thinking that she belongs to a village near by. She implores him to return her shift, and informs him that she is an enchanted princess and cannot go home without it. He is obdurate, and she is obliged to follow him home, where he locks the shift in a chest. After a time she consents to marry him, and bears him several children. One day he goes out, leaving the key of the chest behind. His wife finds it and begs his mother, who keeps house, to open the chest. She thus regains the garment and vanishes. The husband goes off in search of her, climbs the Hühnerberg, and reaches an underground castle. Here he finds a big black dog guarding the door. Round its neck hangs a convenient document explaining how to enter the castle. He thus succeeds in finding his wife, who welcomes him and gives him wine to strengthen him for his coming ordeal, for the Evil One will come at midnight to drive him out. The details which follow are lost, but the husband has probably to endure torture. He is, however, finally successful, and carries off his spouse. The incident of the recovery of the bride is rare in modern European stories belonging to the cycle.

### § 3. *The Marquis of the Sun Type*

The type which this story represents is common among, but not exclusive to, the Latin nations. The tale is told in Seville,<sup>2</sup> and is briefly as follows: The Marquis of the

<sup>1</sup> O. Knoop, "Volkssagen.....und Märchen aus dem östlichen Hinterpommern" (1885), p. 104.

<sup>2</sup> "Folklore Español," vol. i, p. 187.

Sun was an inveterate gambler. A man played with him, and, having lost all he possessed, ended by losing his very soul. His opponent told him that if he wished to regain it he must come to him when he had worn out a pair of iron shoes. In the course of his wanderings he paid the debts of a dead man, whose creditors refused to allow him to be buried unless these were discharged. Later the hero met a horseman, who announced himself as the dead man, and who wished to reward him. Acting upon the dead man's instructions, the hero went to a river to which came three doves, who changed into princesses and bathed in its waters. He annexed the dress of the smallest, who was thus obliged to tell him that she was the daughter of his old antagonist the Marquis, and to show him the way to his castle. Having reached it he demanded his soul, but the Marquis set him certain tasks. He was to level a mountain which prevented the sunlight from reaching the castle; to sow the site of the mountain with fruit trees, and gather their produce in one day for dinner; to find a piece of plate which had been dropped into the river by the Marquis's great-grandfather; to catch and mount a horse, which was the Marquis himself; and to choose a wife from among his daughters. The princess, whom the hero has in his power by retaining her dress, performed the first two tasks, and showed him how to achieve the others. To recover the plate, she made him cut her up and throw the pieces into the river, from which she rose whole and with the lost valuable. In dismembering the lady, however, he carelessly dropped part of her little finger on the ground, and the resulting deformity furnished the means by which he recognized her when choosing a bride.

The birds in this type are usually doves, but occasionally they are swans or geese, and in a Russian variant they are spoonbills. In the next type animals take the place of birds.

§ 4. *The Seal-Maiden Type*

This type is Scandinavian or Celtic, and, once gone, the wife is not regained. The story is common in the Shetland Islands. Thus a man at Unst saw some sea-folk dancing on the shore by moonlight, several sealskins lying near by. He annexed one of the latter, and so became the proprietor of a beautiful maid, whom he married. Some years later one of their children found the sealskin and showed it to her mother. The latter at once put it on, dived into the sea, and was never seen again. The legend of such captures of seal-women is common in the Shetlands, and they are believed to possess the power to conjure up from the sea "a superior breed of horned cattle, many of whose offspring are still to be seen."<sup>1</sup> In this power the Seal-maiden stories resemble the Welsh tale of the Lady of the Van Pool, to be given later. According to Miss Cox,<sup>2</sup> a photograph was exhibited to the Folklore Society "of an old Scotch woman who proudly claims to be the granddaughter of a seal, and tells the story of her grandfather's capturing and marrying the seal maid." A similar belief exists in Ireland, and the same authoress<sup>3</sup> makes the following statement: "On the west coast of Ireland superstitious regard is paid to the seal, which the people cannot be bribed to skin. Some members of the Clan Coneely were said to have been transformed into seals, wherefore these animals go by their names. For this reason many of the clan have changed their patronymic to Connolly. But to this day no Coneely considers that he can kill a seal without afterwards having bad luck, and in some places the tribesmen would no more eat a slaughtered one than they would a human being. A few years ago (says a writer in 1881) a Connolly shot a seal, and every one expected something awful would happen to him." The belief is in all probability founded on

<sup>1</sup> Hartland, *l.c.*, p. 267, *note*.

<sup>2</sup> "Introduction to Folklore," p. 101.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

Totemism, in which, as is well known, no man will eat the flesh of the animal which is his totem.

A story told in the "Journal of the Anthropological Institute"<sup>1</sup> is probably connected with the Seal-maiden tales. It relates to a sealskin which is, or was, preserved at Inniskeen. Years ago a girl was betrothed to one Rooney. One day their coracle was upset in a squall, and all the man's efforts to save his sweetheart were unavailing. As she sank she told him that she would become a white seal and sing to him. One winter's night Rooney declared that he heard her voice, and rushed out of his cabin. He was found next morning on the beach clasping in his arms a white seal.

In some stories it is a mermaid who is captured, and this form of the legend is probably closely connected with that of the Seal-wife. Thus, in a Sutherland tale (in which a change of form in the wife does not occur<sup>2</sup>), a mermaid fell in love with a fisherman. To prevent her from carrying him into the sea, he stole her belt and pouch, without which she was powerless to swim. She became his wife, but trouble ensued. Her life was made a burden by the want of consideration people showed towards her tail; they gibed at it, and the dogs worried her. Moreover, she could not keep her beautiful hair in order, because, like a modern lady and her "vanity bag," her comb and mirror were in the captured pouch. At last one day, when her husband was absent, she found the pouch and belt hidden in a stack of corn which some labourers were demolishing. At once she seized them, plunged into the sea, and disappeared for good.

Sometimes it is the sea-maid who catches the landsman, as in a Cornish legend in which, unlike the specimen from Sutherland, she can assume the form of a land-maid. In the church at Zennor, in West Cornwall, the figure of

<sup>1</sup> Vol. ii, p. 448.

<sup>2</sup> This seems to suggest a later evolution, possibly the adaptation of an older tale to a period when the belief in transformation had decayed.

a mermaid is carved upon a pew. The following story is told concerning it<sup>1</sup>: "Once upon a time" a beautiful lady used to attend Zennor Church, where her looks and singing voice caused half the young men to fall in love with her. One Sunday she smiled at Mathey Trewella, who followed her towards the cliffs and never came back. Several years later a ship cast anchor one Sunday morning off Pendower Cove, near Zennor. As the captain sat on deck he was hailed from the sea, and, looking overboard, saw a lovely mermaid. She begged him to raise his anchor, as it was lying upon the doorway of her house beneath the sea, and she was anxious to get back to her husband, Mathey Trewella, and their children. The frightened captain hurriedly weighed anchor and put to sea, fearing ill-luck. Later, however, he returned and informed the Zennor folk of Mathey's fate, to commemorate which the mermaid figure was carved in the church.

This story may be merely a local invention to account for the presence of the carving, but it is more than likely that it contains in it some survival of the tales under consideration, and I have therefore introduced it here. It is noteworthy that the parish between Zennor and St. Just is that of Morva, or Morveth, which is significantly like the Breton *Morverch*, a mermaid.

In an Esthonian tale a farmer's youngest son married a mermaid, who, as in the case of Mathey, carried him under the sea, and told him he must never call her "Mermaid." Jealousy caused him to spy upon her and break the prohibition by peeping into the locked room where she passed her Thursdays. The effect was serious, for he at once found himself not only on shore but an aged man, and he died soon after. This is clearly a tabu story, and incidentally introduces the mysterious lapse of time in Fairyland. But ill-luck does not always,

<sup>1</sup> "Lyonesse," "Legend Land" (1922), vol. i, p. 5.

it would appear, follow traffic with mermaids, for in another Cornish story from Cury, near Mullion, a man rescued one of these sea-ladies who had been left stranded by the ebbing tide.<sup>1</sup> On her offer to give him any three things he asked, he carried her back to the sea and begged her, in fulfilment of her promise, to make him able to charm away sickness, break the spells of witchcraft, and discover thieves and restore stolen property. To ensure these three requests she gave him her comb. They met several times after, and the "Mermaid's Rock" is shown as the spot where he once took her in order to watch the people walking about upon what she called their "split tails." There is another Mermaid's Rock near to Lamorna Cove, and a mermaid is said to have spoiled the harbour of Padstow in revenge for some one firing a gun at her. Seaton, between Downderry and Looe, is also supposed to have been overwhelmed with sand by a mermaid's revenge.

Macculloch<sup>2</sup> points to a myth belonging to the Tshi-speaking peoples of the Gold Coast as throwing light upon the Seal-wife and Mermaid stories. "A man caught a fish called an *appei*, which begged him to spare her and she would become his wife. He replaced the fish in the water, and, on returning home, found there a young woman, who told him she was the fish, and that now neither they nor any of their descendants (the *appei* clan) must ever eat *appei*, or they would all go into the sea." This is clearly a totem legend.

Wratislaw<sup>3</sup> records the story of a soldier who was watching in a haunted mill when he saw a she-wolf enter. She hung her skin on a peg and became a damsel. She lay down to sleep by the fire, and the soldier took the skin and nailed it to the mill-wheel, so

<sup>1</sup> R. Hunt, *l.c.*, p. 152. Cornwall seems to abound in mermaid stories, and Hunt has collected five notable examples.

<sup>2</sup> *l.c.*, p. 275.

<sup>3</sup> A. H. Wratislaw, "Sixty Fairy-Tales from Exclusively Slavonic Sources" (1889), p. 290.



that the girl was obliged to marry him. Later on the elder of their two sons heard that his mother was a wolf. He obtained from his father the whereabouts of the skin, and told his mother, who went away and never returned.

In a whole host of versions of the Swan-maiden cycle the feather or skin disguise is replaced by garments or articles of conveyance—a variation which obtains even in some stories (as that of the Pomeranian Huntsman) of the Hasan type. The versions are found in the New Hebrides, Greece, Bulgaria, Burmah, Celebes, Santal, and Siberia. Thus Quatu, in Aurora Island (New Hebrides), one day saw some winged women bathing, and took the wings of one and buried them, so that she was obliged to remain his wife until she found them again. This story is reminiscent of the Greek legends of the Nereids. The Santals of India tell how the daughters of the sun reached the earth by means of a spider's web. They invited a shepherd to bathe with them, and the artful fellow started a competition to see which could remain longest under water. When they all had their heads below the surface he fled home, taking the garment of the maiden of his choice. The Sheldrake Duck story, already quoted in connection with the Bluebeard cycle, is probably another of these stories, for in the beginning the wife was captured by her husband, the Partridge, from the water, and was probably originally a sheldrake duck. The Welsh story of the Fairy Bride of Cowrion describes her as flying away from her husband "like a wood hen," which suggests that in the earlier form of the story the bride was transformed into a bird.

### § 5. *The Star's Daughter Type*

In an Algonquin legend<sup>1</sup> a hunter one day saw twelve young and very beautiful girls come down from the skies in a basket. When he tried to approach them they

<sup>1</sup> "La Tradition" (March, 1889), p. 78.

eluded him by returning to the basket, and were drawn up again out of sight. Next time, however, he disguised himself as a mouse, and caught the youngest maiden. They were married, and had a son. But the wife yearned for her sisters, and longed to rejoin them. She made a small basket, entered it with her child, and, singing the charm which she and her sisters were wont to use, returned to the stars. Two years later the star said to his daughter: "Thy son wants to see his father; go down, therefore, to the earth and fetch thy husband, and tell him to bring us specimens of all the animals he kills." The Star's daughter obeyed, and ascended with her husband to the sky, where all the animals he brought were served up at a feast. Those guests who took the paws or tails were transformed into animals. The hunter himself chose a white feather, and he, his wife, and son were transformed into falcons. This is the story which Hartland calls "The Star's Daughter Type," the peculiarity of this type being that it contains no tabu. There are several such variants, notably one from the Loo Choo Islands. Hartland compares it with the Sheldrake Duck story, also told by the Algonquins. This tale, to which I have already alluded more than once, is briefly as follows: A hunter, the Partridge, saw a lovely girl sitting on a rock, making a moccasin, as he paddled homeward in his canoe. When he tried to catch her she plunged into the water and disappeared. Her mother, who lived at the bottom, made her return and marry the Partridge. The incident already described in connection with the Forbidden Chamber cycle (p. 124) then occurred, and when her husband pursued her she jumped into the water and changed into a sheldrake duck. Hartland points out that probably, if the Partridge's wife was originally a duck, as her being first found in the water suggests, so also the Star's daughters were originally falcons. The Star's Daughter story and its variants represent the bolder type of Swan-maiden tales, remark-

able, it must be repeated, for the absence of a tabu. The fuller type is that discussed in the next section.

### § 6. *The Melusina Type*

There are many versions of this curious popular tale; most of them are to be found in *Mélusine*.<sup>1</sup> Briefly told, the story is that Melusina was the daughter of the fay, Pressina. The latter was mated with a mortal, who lost her because he broke the tabu imposed upon him not to see his wife at her confinement. Pressina cursed her daughter to become a serpent from the waist downward every Saturday until she married a man who would give and keep his promise never to see her on that day. The husband, however, succumbed to curiosity, looked through the keyhole, and saw her naked. Later he betrayed himself when one of his children was slain by another, and called his wife "Serpent," whereupon he lost her.

One of the best known of the Melusina stories is that told by Gervase of Tilbury, in which a certain Raymond of Aix, in Provence, met a beautiful lady mounted on a palfrey, when he was riding alone by the river. He spoke to her, and, to his astonishment, she replied to him by name. Thus encouraged, the enamoured lord made improper overtures, the prompt refusal of which was tempered by the lady offering to marry him. On his agreeing, she stipulated that he should never see her naked. Transgression of the compact would entail loss of all prosperity and happiness. They were married, and enjoyed every earthly felicity. One day, however, he returned after hunting to his castle when she was bathing in their bed-chamber, and he thought he would go and see her in her bath. In vain she pleaded from behind the curtain; Raymond tore it down, and beheld her in her birthday suit. Immediately she changed into a serpent,

<sup>1</sup> H. Gaidoz and E. Rolland, "*Mélusine Recueil de Mythologie*," etc. (1878), still proceeding.

dived her head under the water, and was never seen again, although at night she could be heard attending to her children. According to Gervase,<sup>1</sup> one of her daughters married a relative of his own, and her descendants were alive at the time he wrote.

A similar legend comes from Japan, in which Hohodemi is not permitted to approach his wife Toyotamahine, the Sea-god's daughter, during her confinement. He breaks the tabu, and he sees her in the form of a dragon. When she learns from her husband's guilty face what he has done, she plunges into the sea. Her son is said to have become the first Emperor of Japan. In a Moravian story the usual undisciplined peep through the keyhole shows the wife to have the lower extremities of a goat, and the husband regains her only by undergoing adventures *à la* Hasan of Bassorah. Another version, from the Tyrol, runs on the lines of the Cupid and Psyche cycle, a drop of hot wax falling on the lady's cheek when her husband looks at her by candlelight, which he has been forbidden to do. In this story also the wife is regained by a series of adventures, which include the wearing out of a pair of iron shoes and the use of a cloak of invisibility. In a Corsican tale it is the view of the wife's naked shoulder which is forbidden; when seen it is that of a skeleton.

We now come to a famous Welsh story, that of the Lady of the Van Pool,<sup>2</sup> of which several versions are known. More than one is given by Hartland,<sup>3</sup> and I select that by Rees, of Tonn, which is the most complete, quoting it in Hartland's words: "The son of a widow who lived at Blaensawdde, a little village about three-quarters of a mile from the Pool, was one day attending his mother's cattle upon its shore when, to his astonishment, he beheld the Lady of the Lake sitting upon its unruffled

<sup>1</sup> Gerv. Tilb. Dec., i, c. 15.

<sup>2</sup> This is the lake of Llyn-y-Fan-Fach, at the foot of the Van Mountains, near Llandovery, in Carmarthenshire.

<sup>3</sup> *l.c.*, p. 275.

surface, which she used as a mirror while she combed out her graceful ringlets. She imperceptibly glided nearer to him, but eluded his grasp and refused the bait of barley bread and cheese that he held out to her, saying as she dived and disappeared :

Hard-baked is thy bread ;  
It is not easy to catch me !<sup>1</sup>

An offer of unbaked dough, or *toes*, the next day was equally unsuccessful. She exclaimed :

Unbaked is thy bread !  
I will not have thee.

But the slightly baked bread which the youth subsequently took, by his mother's advice, was accepted ; he seized the lady's hand, and persuaded her to become his bride. Diving into the lake, she then fetched her father—' a hoary-headed old man of noble mien and extraordinary stature, but having otherwise all the force and strength of youth '—who rose from the depths with *two* ladies, and was ready to consent to the match provided the young man could distinguish which of the twain before him was the object of his affections. This was no small test of love, inasmuch as the maidens were exactly alike in form and features. One of them, however, thrust her foot a little forward ; and the hero recognized a peculiarity of her shoe-tie, which he had somehow had leisure to notice at his previous interviews. The father admitted the correctness of his choice, and bestowed a dowry of sheep, cattle, goats, and horses, but stipulated in the most business-like way that these animals should return with the bride if at any time her husband prove unkind and struck her thrice without cause."

In two other versions the three causeless blows form the tabu, which is disobeyed—usually by accident. One version is remarkable for the fact that, after the lady left her husband, she continued to see their three sons and to

<sup>1</sup> I dispense with the Welsh equivalent.

instruct them in physic, prophesying that they and their issue would become during many generations the most renowned doctors in the county.<sup>1</sup>

### § 7. *The Nightmare Type*

This is the last type in Hartland's classification, and is allied to the Croatian Wolf-maiden tale. It is remarkable for its curious relation to England as the home of the "Nightmare," which, according to Hartland, in German and Slavonic superstition "is a human being—frequently one whose love has been slighted, and who in this shape is enabled to approach the beloved object. It slips through the keyhole, or any other hole in a building, and presses its victim sometimes to death." The word "nightmare" means literally "night-crusher," being derived from the Aryan root *Mar*, to crush. The general type of stories of this class is well shown in that selected by Hartland,<sup>2</sup> as follows: Being troubled by a nightmare, a man stopped up the hole through which it entered, and next morning found a young and beautiful girl in the room. To his inquiry whence she came she replied, "From Engelland." He hid her clothes—an uncommon incident in this type of tale, but valuable as showing the connection with the Swan-maiden cycle. She married him, and bore him three children. Whenever she sat spinning she always sang:

Now calls my mother (*or*, blows my father) in Engelland,  
Mary Catherine  
Drive out thy swine.

In the end the husband returned home one day to find that his wife had told the children that she had come as a nightmare from Engelland. This annoyed him and led to reproaches, whereupon she opened the cupboard in which her clothes were hidden, threw them over her, and

<sup>1</sup> Physicians of Myddvai-Meddygon Myddfai. Trans. by J. Pughe, F.R.C.S., edited by the Rev. J. W. ab Ithel, M.A. (1861), xxi.

<sup>2</sup> *l.c.*, p. 279.

vanished. She did not, however, altogether leave husband and children, for on Saturdays she returned invisible to lay out their clean clothes, and every night she appeared while the others were sleeping to lift the baby from its cradle and hush it at her breast.

There are several versions of the nightmare story, in which she is caught in the shape of a straw, and usually released by removing the stopper from the hole by which she entered. It is noteworthy that knot-holes are believed in fairy-lore to be passages by which elves and such-like beings can enter. The nightmare maiden describes herself as having come out of England, and says that she has become what she is because the priest who baptized her made some omission in the service, and that she can be cured by rebaptism. A child can also become a nightmare if it is born on a Sunday and baptized on a Sunday at the same hour, or if some evilly-disposed person has secretly mumbled "It shall become a nightmare" in reply to the priest's questions. According to a North German superstition, when seven boys or seven girls are born successively one of them becomes a nightmare. The nightmare often hears the voice of her mother calling her, and vanishes—"goes home to mother"—on being reproached with her origin, or asked how she became a nightmare. When she has disappeared she usually returns invisibly to perform some act of service on a Sunday morning, such as putting out her husband's clean linen.

A Pomeranian story, cited by Hartland as the only instance in which the nightmare-wife is recovered, is interesting. It tells how an officer was much troubled by the nightmare, whom he caught and married. Although they remained together for some years, she would never tell whence she came. At last she persuaded her husband to open the holes he had closed up. The next morning she was gone, leaving upon the table the words, written in chalk, "If thou wilt seek me, the Commander of London is my father." He went to London, found her,

had her rebaptized, and they "lived happy ever after." Why England should thus be regarded as the home of the nightmare does not appear to be known.

### § 8. *General Considerations*

Throughout the types of the Swan-maiden cycle there runs the one central idea of a mortal marrying a supernatural maiden whom he is unable to retain. She has to return to her own people, and if her husband wishes to regain her he is obliged to go after her and perform superhuman tasks to achieve his desire. To this main incident are often added others—such as those of the Forbidden Door (Hasan and a Transylvanian story), the Cap of Invisibility and the Magic Rod (Hasan), the persecution by the wife's relatives (Hasan), the Causeless Blows (Lady of the Van Pool), the Reproach as to Origin (Melusina, Nightmare), the Recognition of the Bride by a Mutilation (Marquis of the Sun), or a shoe-tie (Lady of the Van Pool), the violation of her seclusion (Melusina), the helpful animals (Arawák story; they are replaced by mighty potentates in Hasan), the meanings of all of which have been indicated in previous Chapters. The potency of iron is also introduced, for the wife usually appears incapable of opening the receptacle in which her garment is hidden, and has to seek outside aid; probably her supernatural origin proved a sufficient bar to her touching the iron key and lock.

It is possible to trace the evolution of the Swan-maiden cycle to its primitive form, and this has been done clearly and briefly by Macculloch.<sup>1</sup> The key lies in the capture and subsequent possession of the woman's dress. Thus, in a Micmac story, Pulowech the Partridge sees three girls bathing, and compels one to become his wife by stealing her hair-string; and in an Irish tale John obtains Grey Norris's daughter by taking her clothes. This is also

<sup>1</sup> *l.c.*, pp. 345-89.



the case in the Pomeranian story given above (p. 172) ; and it occurs also in Chinese, Algonquin, and New Guinea instances. These are all primitive examples, and it is a fact well known to anthropologists that primitive peoples attach great importance to articles of women's clothing, however scanty they may be, and regard them practically as sacred. Thus Romilly<sup>1</sup> describes how a boy in New Guinea was saved from death by the women throwing their petticoats over him, because the men then dared not touch him. The idea is that possession of a garment may be used to work magic on the sexual organs. "The tabus," says Macculloch,<sup>2</sup> "work in two ways: (1) as a protection of those sexual centres against magical or other influences; (2) since these organs symbolize life, they are, therefore, in themselves or in their representations, forces powerful to work harm or to neutralize it; hence they must be covered and concealed." The same idea is shown by the importance with which the Greeks and other peoples regarded the unloosening of the bride's girdle by the bridegroom at marriage. The Swan-maiden is subject to her husband only so long as he can keep her dress—an instance of contact magic. In the case of the Mermaid, it is her belt and pouch that have to be retained.

As man progressed, the superstitions regarding clothes weakened, and the stories then began to be told of supernatural women, and became influenced by Totemistic and Beast-marriage ideas. The Totem origin is suggested in the earlier and more primitive versions, where the woman is an animal which possesses the power of self-transformation. Still later, when the Beast-marriage idea was amalgamated with the stories and the totemistic origin was forgotten, the bird or animal bride gradually became an animal only when she put on her plumage or animal skin.

<sup>1</sup> H. H. Romilly, "From My Verandah in New Guinea" (1889), p. 134.

<sup>2</sup> *l.c.*, p. 345.

"This," says Macculloch,<sup>1</sup> "is the real origin of the Swan-maiden group—the beast-skin of the Beast-marriage cycle has replaced the tabued garment of the group which told the danger women incurred through letting a man steal that garment. And as in these stories the woman regained her freedom by recovering her garment, so when the animal-wife sees her feather dress or wings by accident the old animal nature returns to her, she is tempted to put them on or strongly desires to do so, and no sooner are they donned than she must quit human society. Thus two quite separate story groups have coalesced as neatly as do the two natures, animal and human, in the lovely and coveted Swan-maiden."

It has been pointed out that the bride either never returns or is regained by means of superhuman tasks. The former is probably the more primitive, because "it follows that only when the story is told of men who can be perceived as released from the limitations we have been gradually learning during the progress of civilization to regard as essential to humanity—only when the reins are laid upon the neck of convention—is it possible to relate the narrative of the recovery of the bride."<sup>2</sup>

Another point about the Swan-maiden stories is that in many of them the husband is adopted into the wife's family, as is especially the case in the Maori variants and in the Arawâk example (p. 171). This is a reflection of the social condition known as the Matriarchate, in which descent is reckoned through the mother. These stories are therefore the more primitive. In the Arawâk tale the husband's desire to visit his mother is a breach of custom, and therefore leads to disaster. There is a possible survival of the Matriarchate in Hasan's troubles with his formidable sister-in-law. In the Marquis of the Sun we have, on the other hand, a story of more recent type as regards development than the others, in

<sup>1</sup> *l.c.*, p. 347.

<sup>2</sup> Hartland, *l.c.*, p. 283.

none of which is the father's superior position so clearly recognizable. The Lady of the Van Pool also indicates the authority of the father.

Lastly, in the tasks imposed upon the husband and in the flight of the bride it is probable that marriage, both by purchase and by capture, is reflected. They remind us of the conditions of servitude imposed by Laban upon Jacob and the customs of serving for a wife obtaining in many primitive tribes.

## CHAPTER X

### HEROES, HISTORICAL AND HYPOTHETICAL

"Dreams that the soul of youth engage  
Ere Fancy has been quelled;  
Old legends of the monkish page,  
Traditions of the saint and sage,  
Tales that have the rime of age,  
And ehronicles of Eld."

—LONGFELLOW ("Voices of the Night").

#### § 1. *Heroes and Hero Myths*

IN the course of this work I have dealt with numerous heroes and heroines, nearly all of mythical origin, but with at least one allusion to stories woven around real individuals. Thus, in discussing the Robber Bridegroom type of the Forbidden Chamber cycle, I pointed out how the story had been used to besmirch the name and justify the burning of Sir John Baker, holder of the Recordership of London in the reign of Edward VI and of other honourable offices in the service of that monarch's father and sister (p. 126). There can be little doubt that this man's persecution and death were due to his being a Papist at the time when Protestantism was struggling for supremacy in England. His case is by no means singular, and religious enmity has been the cause of traducing the characters of many otherwise worthy historical individuals. There is no need to go far for examples: The Emperor Julian, stigmatized as "The Apostate," will occur to every reader of Gibbon who contrasts his character with that of Constantine, the political founder of Christianity, with results distinctly unfavourable to the latter. In our own history, according to an anonymous contributor to "Temple Bar,"<sup>1</sup> William

<sup>1</sup> Vol. xxxviii (1878), p. 49.

Rufus was by no means the bad king we are taught to regard him ; but, having been done to death by the all-powerful Church, his assassins (*de jure*, if not *de facto*) then deliberately added insult to injury by writing false history about him.

Myths have crept into history concerning real persons, and mythical personages have been instated as actually existent. To the former category belong such stories as those of King Alfred in the neatherd's hut, Knut and the rising tide, Whittington and his Cat, and Lady Godiva, whose story has been so ably analysed by Hartland ; while examples of the latter are to be found in William Tell, and probably King Arthur. It is with these popular legends that I shall deal in this Chapter, giving also some account of the famous popular fairy-tales of Jack the Giant-killer and Jack and the Beanstalk, together with remarks upon that cycle of herostories in which a fortunate youngest son is made the central figure.

Before passing to the consideration of these matters, a few words may be devoted to our patron saint, George. According to Gibbon,<sup>1</sup> George of Cappadocia was the reverse of saintly. That historian condemns him, to use Clodd's words,<sup>2</sup> "as a fraudulent army contractor." Ganneau has endeavoured to establish the saint's relation to the Egyptian Horus and Typhon. Macculloch<sup>3</sup> remarks, however—and this is really all that need be noted for our particular purpose—that "whether St. George of Merry England was the Christian Martyr George of Nicomedia, or, as Gibbon believed, the Arian heretic and persecutor George of Cappadocia, it is certain that the story of his slaying the dragon is a mere folk-tale which has now become inseparably attached to his memory." The identification of the saint, whose red cross has been for so many centuries the banner under which Englishmen

<sup>1</sup> "Decline and Fall," Everyman Edn., vol. ii, pp. 397-99.

<sup>2</sup> Clodd, "Myths and Dreams" (1891), p. 52.

<sup>3</sup> *l.c.*, p. 381.

have fought and died, with one or other of the two individuals mentioned probably depends largely upon one's attitude towards the history of Christianity, and hardly concerns us here. Whichever way he is regarded, however, there can be no doubt that he has been made the central figure in one variant of that Dragon Sacrifice cycle of stories discussed in Chapter III. The precise story is that a dragon had its lair in a lake near the city of Silene, and, after suffering from its depredations until they were in despair, the people cast lots to decide who should be sacrificed to him from among their dearest. The awful fate fell to the king's daughter, and she was accordingly sent to her doom. While on her way, however, St. George met her and was told the story. He reassured her, made the sign of the cross, attacked and transfixed the dragon, and led him into Silene, where he publicly decapitated it, and the king and all his subjects were baptized as a thanksgiving. This variant of a well-known story cycle is an excellent example of the adaptation of a folk-tale for a particular purpose—namely, to incorporate a tradition or superstition which the common people refuse to give up. Later on, when the new cult has attained to an assured and powerful position, it may endeavour to account for the engrafted tradition by asserting it to be an allegory. For example, in "Notes on the Holy Days of the English Church,"<sup>1</sup> after a very misleading account of George of Cappadocia, occurs the following: "This pictorial allegory of the Christian's warfare against 'the old Serpent, the dragon,' commonly occurs in Eastern and Western art, and is too well known to need description; as in the case of other Saints, however, it has become the foundation of a ridiculous legend."

### § 2. *King Arthur and Lady Godiva*

The legends of Arthur and of Lady Godiva, hallowed

<sup>1</sup> Church Press Co. (1866), p. 50.

by centuries of tradition, are dear to the English people. Whether the heroic king ever existed is, however, extremely doubtful; that the humane lady lived is practically certain. In Cornwall, the legendary locality of Arthur's birth and death, there is, according to Hunt,<sup>1</sup> a remarkable scarcity of traditions connected with him. "We hear," he says, "of Prince Arthur at the Land's End, and of his fights with Danes in two or three other places. Merlin, who may be considered as especially associated with Arthur, has left indications of his presence here and there, in prophetic rhymes not always fulfilled; but of Arthur's chieftains we have no folklore. All the rock markings, or rock peculiarities, which would in West Cornwall have been given to the giants are referred to King Arthur in the Eastern districts."

As a matter of fact, Arthur "is as mythical as the wolf that suckled Romulus and Remus."<sup>2</sup> He is but "a variant of Sigurd and Perseus; the winning of his famous sword but a repetition of the story of the Teutonic and Greek heroes; the gift of Guinevere as fatal to him as Helen to Menelaus; his knights but reproductions of the Achaian hosts—much of which may be true; but the romance corresponded to some probable event; it fitted in with the national traditions."<sup>3</sup> Arthur belongs to a number of stories widely scattered through Europe, containing the superstition of an expected deliverer. Like Holger the Dane, the reputed British king sleeps in Avalon until the time comes when he shall be needed. Much later we have the same idea in the tradition of Drake and his Drum:—

"Take my drum to England, hang et by the shore,  
Strike et when your powder's running low.  
If the Dons sight Devon, I'll quit the port o' Heaven,  
An' drum them up the Channel, as we drummed them  
long ago."

<sup>1</sup> *l.c.*, p. 303.

<sup>2</sup> Clodd, "Myths and Dreams," p. 123.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 125.

So also was Harold supposed not to have been slain at Senlac, but waiting to return to lead his countrymen to victory. The same superstition existed concerning Roderick the Last of the Goths, Don Sebastian of Spain, Alfatimi the Moor, Bruce of Scotland, Siegfried, Frederick Barbarossa, and others. The story is connected with the idea of a Messiah and with the numerous legends concerning culture-gods and heroes who will one day return. Quetzalcoatl of Mexico, Viracocha of Peru, Vishnu of India, are examples of these.

Connected with these legends are the traditions of sleeping hosts who sometimes ride at midnight through the countryside, to the terror of late wanderers. Arthur and his warriors were believed to sleep beneath Craig-y-Dinas, in the Vale of Neath, as also in Yorkshire and in the recesses of Mount Etna—a somewhat ubiquitous monarch. So also, with their attendant hosts, lie Owen Lawgoch in a cave near Llandilo; Owen Glendower in the Vale of Gwent; Earl Gerald in a cavern under the Castle of Mullaghmast; Bruce on Rathlin Island; Holger the Dane beneath the Castle of Kronberg; and Frederick Barbarossa, like Arthur, in several places at once. At times these grim ghosts sally forth to ride—a wild hunt—through the neighbourhood of their sleeping places. They have been identified conclusively by Grimm with Woden and his host, transformed by succeeding beliefs into later heroes. Moreover, they are not always men, for sometimes women, like Morgan le Fay or Dame Holle, are the leaders, and the latter Grimm has proved to be a pagan goddess (p. 11).

The legend, so precious to Coventry, of Lady Godiva has been conclusively worked out by Hartland<sup>1</sup> to be a myth woven around a person of undoubted historicity. Godiva, or Godgifu, was the wife of Leofric, earl of the Mercians, and mother of Earls Morcar and Edwin and of

<sup>1</sup> *l.c.*, p. 71, *sq.*



Edith, whose second marriage was with King Harold II. The earliest mention of her traditional ride *in puris naturalibus* through Coventry is by Roger of Wendover, about one hundred and fifty years after her death. Exigencies of space preclude the recapitulation here of Hartland's analysis, and only his conclusions can be given. These are based upon the absence of historical foundation for the tradition; the close resemblance between the tradition and other stories and superstitions dealing unquestionably with such heathen goddesses as Berchta and Hertha; the equally close analogy with similar processions described in Eastern stories which could not have reached England at the latest period when the procession could possibly have been instituted; and between the procession and certain pagan rites practised in the East, in Rome, Germany, and Britain itself; the occurrence of a similar procession at Southam, near Coventry, having the special feature of a black lady, best explained as a survival of certain ancient British rites; and the connection between an analogous legend at St. Briavel's and the remains of a sacred communal feast which was the degraded remnant of a pagan observance. The result of Hartland's research leads to the conclusion that "the ceremony at Coventry is a survival of an annual rite in honour of a heathen goddess, from which men were excluded.<sup>1</sup> This rite, like all such, would have been a part of the tribal cult, and intimately associated with tribal life and organization. Side by side with it a myth would have been evolved accounting for the performance as a dramatic representation of an event in the goddess's career. This myth would have been similar to those" cited by Hartland as parallel myths, "and would have comprised an explanation of the exclusion of men." Hence the introduction of Peeping Tom, whose famous

<sup>1</sup> Many peoples have their women's rites and mysteries, from which men are excluded; just as women are excluded from men's mysteries, such as the initiation of boys.

statue in Coventry is really that of a man in armour, no earlier than the time of Henry VII. The preservation of the myth in later days is due to the fact that, with the introduction of Christianity, the innate conservatism of mankind refused to give up the old custom, and the new religion was consequently obliged to accept it and invest it with a new significance more in accordance with its principles.

### § 3. *William Tell*

The well-known story of William Tell is an example of the way in which a hero-legend common to other countries can be adopted and worked into local history around a person wholly mythical and, apparently, invented for the purpose. Briefly told, the story is that in 1296 Gessler, Governor under Albert of Hapsburg, set his hat on a pole at Altdorf as an imperial ensign, and ordered all passers-by to do it reverence. Tell, hating alike Gessler and the tyranny for which the hat stood, refused to obey, and the enraged Governor ordered him to shoot an apple off the head of his son. He succeeded, and when Gessler asked him why he had placed a second arrow in his belt he replied: "It was for you. Had I shot my child, know that this would have pierced your heart."

Such, shorn of any picturesqueness of narrative, is the story for which Freudenberger was burned alive by the Canton of Uri in the early eighteenth century for stating it to be of Danish origin, and which was admitted in 1883<sup>1</sup> by the Swiss themselves, in their school-teaching, to be legendary. It speaks volumes for human credulity that a fountain is pointed out in the market-place at Altdorf as marking the site of Tell's exploit, and that the actual cross-bow with which he performed it is reverently preserved at Zurich!

Not only is the name of William Tell completely absent from the history of the three cantons, but no one

<sup>1</sup> The "Times," June 25, 1883.

named Gessler was ever Governor to the House of Hapsburg, and the legend does not correspond to any fact of Austrian oppression. Clodd<sup>1</sup> quotes an article from the "Edinburgh Review"<sup>2</sup> as stating that "there exist in contemporary records no instances of wanton outrage and insolence on the Hapsburg side. It was the object of that power to obtain political ascendancy, and not to indulge its representatives in lust or wanton insult." On the contrary, "the symptoms of violence, as is natural enough, appear rather on the side of the Swiss than on that of the aggrandizing imperial house."

The first appearance of Tell and his apple is in the chronicle of Melchior Russ, written about one hundred and seventy years after the supposed event. But the story is far older than the date (1296) at which it is stated to have happened. The Danish legend which was the cause of the unfortunate Freudenberger's fiery end is contained in the writings of Saxo Grammaticus (twelfth century), and is told of Palnatoki, of the bodyguard of Harold Bluetooth, in 950. This soldier boasted in his cups that he could hit an apple from a stick at the first shot. Harold, hearing of his vaunt, ordered him to make it good by shooting the apple from his son's head. The boy was warned to stand steady and with his back to the bowman. Palnatoki drew three arrows and succeeded in his task with the first. When the king questioned him as to the two remaining shafts he replied that he had taken them "that I might avenge on thee the swerving of the first by the points of the others, lest perchance my innocence might have been punished, while your violence escaped scot free."

The reader cannot fail to note the close parallel between the two stories. The same remarkable likeness belongs to the Icelandic Saga, "The Vilkina," the tale of Harold, son of Sigurd, and the Norse "Saint Olaf." In

<sup>1</sup> "Myths and Dreams," p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> January, 1869, p. 134.

the last named the hero, Eindridi, had to shoot a writing-tablet from his son's head in competition against Olaf. Olaf loosed the first arrow and grazed the lad's head, when his mother stopped further experiments. In this story, again, Eindridi meant to revenge himself if his son was hurt. The gentle Olaf who suggested the cruel competition was a Christian saint who wished to convert to his religion of love and tenderness the heathen Eindridi! In a variant from the Farøe Islands, Harold orders Geyti to perform the William Tell act, a hazelnut taking the place of the apple. He also provides an extra arrow for possible revenge. The same story occurs in the English ballad of William of Cloudeslee, in a legend from the Upper Rhine (in which a coin is the mark), and in a poem of the twelfth century from Persia.

But the myth is found among peoples other than those of Aryan origin. It figures in a Finnish story, in which the relationship of archer and mark is reversed, the son shooting the apple from his father's head; while Dasent<sup>1</sup> states that it is common to the Turks, Mongolians, and Samoyedes.

#### § 4. *Whittington and his Cat*

The legend of Whittington and his Cat affords another instance of the grafting of a popular story on to the life of a prominent person, and, although Besant (who finished the biography of the famous Lord Mayor commenced by his co-author, Rice<sup>2</sup>) tried hard to give the story some justification, there is little doubt that its connection with Whittington is unwarranted.

In this famous story, upon which our boyhood loves to dwell, the hero is depicted as a poor country lad of humble origin who makes his way to London, with its fabulous gold-paved streets, to find menial employment in the house of Alderman Fitz-Warren. By means of his cat,

<sup>1</sup> *I.c.*, Introduction.

<sup>2</sup> W. Besant and J. Rice, "Sir Richard Whittington" (1902).

the only property he possessed, and which he ventured in one of his master's ships, he attained to fortune, married Alice, his employer's daughter, and became Lord Mayor. This honourable office he held thrice, thus fulfilling the prophecy which he thought he heard in the voices of the London bells when, running away to escape the ill-treatment of a shrewish cook, he rested on Highgate Hill.

In this popular story there appear to be only two items of truth: Whittington did marry an Alice Fitz-Warren, and he was three times Lord Mayor of London. The rest—alas! for the cherished romance of childhood—is entirely without foundation. The real facts of the distinguished citizen's life, as given by Besant, are as follows. He was born at Pauntley, Gloucestershire, about 1358, where, in the west window of the Norman church, Lysons<sup>1</sup> found "the arms of Whittington impaling Melbourne on the right-hand side, and on the left those of Whittington impaling Fitz-Warren, thus clearly identifying our hero, whose wife was Alice Fitz-Warren, with the Pauntley family beyond dispute." Richard was the son, not of some plebeian hind, but of Sir William Whittington and his wife, the widow of Sir Thomas de Berkeley, of Coverley, Gloucestershire, whom he married in 1352-3. She belonged to the Mansels of Devonshire. There is no need to pursue Richard's career beyond pointing out that in 1371, at the age of thirteen, he went to London, where he amassed his fortune in the usual way of apprenticeship and honourable trade. He was first made Lord Mayor in 1396, taking the place of Adam Bamme, who died in office; served for the year 1397, and was re-elected in 1406 and 1419. It was during his third term that he entertained, on a scale of great magnificence, Henry V and his Queen, when he is said to have thrown into the fire his sovereign's bonds to the value of £60,000—a stupendous sum at that period.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. S. Lysons, "The Model Merchant of the Fourteenth Century" (1859).

He was M.P. for the City in 1416, and died in 1423, at the age of about sixty-five years.

Such is the true history of Dick, the low-born lad of popular legend. Now let us learn something of the legend itself, which appears to have been connected with Whittington's name as early as within three generations of his death.<sup>1</sup> There have been many ingenious attempts at solving the problem of its origin, and Riley<sup>2</sup> suggested that "cat" was a corruption of the French *achât*, a purchase, or that the ships which carried sea-coal were called "cats," and that a "cat" full of coal may have been the foundation of Dick's fortune. Both of these conjectures Besant rejects upon good grounds, pointing out that *achât*, by analogy, would become "ashats" or "ashets"; that the coal ships were called "hoys"; and that Whittington was a mercer, and unlikely to venture in other trades. Lysons believed in the cat story, and Besant tried to think it rested on good foundation,<sup>3</sup> remarking that "it is nearly certain that the very executors of Whittington, when they rebuilt Newgate, immediately after his death, believed the story; and it would seem that, if his executors wished to commemorate the cat legend, it must have been true." It is true that these executors rebuilt Newgate, and that Pennant states that in a niche in the gate was a figure "representing Liberty.....and the figure of a cat lying at his feet; alluding to the figure of Sir Richard Whittington, a former founder, who is said to have made the first step to his good fortune by a cat." This Besant apparently considers to have been a statue of Whittington; but Besant was a writer of fiction as well as an antiquarian, and many of his conjectures in the latter capacity have proved inaccurate; nor was he, so far as I am aware, versed in folklore. May not the cat at the foot of Liberty have been a leopard of England, the precursor of that British Lion so long associated with British liberty?

<sup>1</sup> Besant, *l.c.*, p. 135.

<sup>2</sup> "Memorials of London," quoted by Besant.

<sup>3</sup> *l.c.*, p. 137.

However this may be, it was not until 1605 that the earliest version of the cat story appeared in print in a chap-book; and in a portrait of Whittington engraved by Elstracke in the reign of James I the famous Lord Mayor is represented with one hand resting on a skull. Subsequently Peter Stent, a print-seller in Pye Corner, Smithfield, acquired the plate and had the emblem of mortality, common in portraits of the time, converted into a cat; and Granger has remarked<sup>1</sup> that "the cat has been inserted, as the common people do not care to buy the print without it."

The real origin of the legend is given by Clouston.<sup>2</sup> It was current in Europe in the thirteenth century. To that period belongs the Chronicle of Albert, Abbot of the Convent of St. Mary at Slade, in which appears the tale of two citizens of Venice, one rich and one poor. The former went abroad to trade, and the poor man gave him *two* cats to venture, and these produced great wealth. A similar story is told of a Genoese merchant and two cats in the Tuscan Facetiæ of Arlotto (fifteenth century), which was reproduced in the seventeenth century by Count Lorenzo Magalotti, a Florentine, who told it of a merchant of the time of Amerigo Vespucci. It is also narrated of a Portuguese, in a description of Guinea published in 1665.

The story is, in fact, common all over Europe; it occurs in Norway, Russia, Denmark ("The Honest Penny"), and in the Breton popular tale of "Les Trois Frères, ou, le Chat, le Coq, et l'Echelle," to be found in "Mélusine." Finally, the story of Kays, found in the History of Persia, by Abdulláh the son of Fazlulláh, published sixty years before Richard Whittington was born, describes the cat incident as occurring in the eleventh century.

### § 5. *Jack the Giant-killer*

The thrilling nursery-tale of Jack the Giant-killer has

<sup>1</sup> J. Granger, "Biographical History of England" (1769).

<sup>2</sup> W. A. Clouston, "Popular Tales and Fictions," 1887, vol. ii, p. 65.

not yet been analysed with the completeness which has been devoted to Cinderella, Tom Tit Tot, Bluebeard, and the Swan-maiden. The existing version, as Canon Macculloch has very kindly pointed out to me in a letter, comes from chap-books, which probably utilized an older folk-tale or scattered folk-tale incidents. The chap-book story is a mixture of common incidents, badly put together, and which were possibly better arranged in the oral version from which it was made. Many of the incidents, such as the shoes of swiftness, the cap of invisibility, and the hen which laid the golden eggs, are common items of folk-tale, and have been already dealt with.

According to Clouston,<sup>1</sup> there can be no doubt that Jack the Giant-killer came from the North—that Teutonic North where the legends of giants and the contests between them and their great enemy Thor form no small part of the Northern mythology. Probably some of the incidents, often found in Asiatic popular tales, may be taken as survivals of primitive Aryan myths relating to monstrous beasts or brutal aboriginal races of men :

Of Titan's monstrous race

Raw hides they wore for clothes, their drink was blood,  
Rocks were their dining-rooms, their prey their food,  
Caverns their lodging, and their bed their grove,  
Their cup some hollow trunk.<sup>2</sup>

How early the story took shape is at present an open question ; the period is usually given as that of King Arthur, who was (if Geoffrey of Monmouth is to be believed) himself a giant-killer. The connection between Arthur and Cornwall has already been noted, and Cornwall possesses a wealth of giant-lore. According to Halliwell,<sup>3</sup> Jack was tutor in giant-killing to Arthur's only son, and Tom Thumb was that monarch's favourite dwarf.<sup>4</sup> Canon

<sup>1</sup> *l.c.*, vol. i, p. 75.

<sup>2</sup> Havilan's "Arohitrenium."

<sup>3</sup> J. O. Halliwell, "Popular Rhymes and Nursery Tales" (1849).

<sup>4</sup> F. J. Campbell, *l.c.*, tale lxi.



Macculloch suggests in the letter referred to that there may have been an ancient British version of the story, or that Arthur may have been given some of the incidents of such a tale. Jacobs<sup>1</sup> refers to a prototype of Jack in Walter Map's "De Nugis Curialium."

Stories concerning giants seem to be world wide, and some of them have been discussed in Chapter II. Giants take a prominent part in Cornish folklore, where Cormoran and his wife Cormelian built St. Michael's Mount,<sup>2</sup> and others inhabited Treryn Castle, Trecredben, Les-cudjack Hill, Cairn Galva, Morva, and other prehistoric works. The county has its Holiburn, Trebiggan, Blunderbuss, Bolster (whose legs could span six miles), and Wrath, or Ralph. One of these giants appears to have been a cyclops.<sup>3</sup> To the West country also belonged Ordulph, the Tavistock Samson,<sup>4</sup> who seems to have been a real person, since he is said to have torn out the portcullis and kicked down the gate of Exeter because entrance was too tardily offered to King Edward of the Saxons. He and his father Orgar are reputed to lie in the Abbey Church at Tavistock, where his thigh-bone is still preserved. There are giants also in other parts of the British Isles—Tarquin of Manchester, Carados of Shrewsbury, Finn-ma-Coul of Ireland, and others, not forgetting Gog-Magog. No doubt the idea of giants, most of whom appear to have been cannibals, may have arisen from the horror with which a superior race regarded a more primitive people inhabiting the wilder parts of the country—possibly the aborigines whom they had supplanted. In desolate regions abounding in massive natural rocks resembling ruined castles, or in huge prehistoric works like Castle-an-Dinas, near Penzance, and Maiden Castle at Dorchester, the people would try to account for them by supposing that they had been reared by a bygone race of giants.

<sup>1</sup> J. J. Jacobs, *l.c.*, p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>3</sup> Hunt, *l.c.*, p. 46.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.

There is a host of popular stories connected with Jack the Giant-killer in which a small man, usually a tailor or cobbler, succeeds in attracting attention by his boasting, whereby he gets the opportunity of winning wife and fortune, and does so by pretending to perform certain superhuman tasks by his own superior cunning. The best known is that of Grimm's "Valiant Tailor," of which there are several English variants. This little man started off in search of adventures with a new cheese and an old hen in his wallet. He met a giant, and the pair soon started a trial of strength. The giant squeezed a stone in his hand until it dropped water; but Snip did better with his cheese by making it run whey. It may be remarked in parenthesis that giants in fairy-tale are always very stupid—probably a reflection of the contempt of the superior invader for the primitive aborigine. Then the giant hurled a stone so high that it went almost out of sight, whereupon the tailor threw his hen into the air, and it flew quite away. The astonished giant next suggested their carrying away a prostrate oak tree. The tailor directed him to pick up the butt and hid himself in the branches, so making his antagonist carry him as well. Soon the giant tired and dropped his end, whereupon the tailor skipped nimbly down, pretended to hold the branches, and reproached him for his weakness. The tale goes on to describe how Snip went home with the giant, and by sleeping on the floor avoided the murderous stroke of his host's iron walking-stick on the bed. When the giant and his brother sons of Anak met their guest next day they bolted in fright. Later, by throwing stones at them as they slept, the artful tailor succeeded in making the giants quarrel and kill each other. He then wounded their bodies with a sword, and reported to the king of the country that he had slain them. The monarch set him the task of ridding the country of a fierce unicorn, and he started off to do so with an axe and a rope. When the savage animal charged him he slipped behind a tree so

that the beast transfixed it with its horn and could not free itself. Snip tied the unicorn up at his leisure, chopped its horn off with his axe, and led it to the king, who rewarded him with the half of his kingdom.

Among the variants of this tale are *The Wonderful Cobbler of Wellington*,<sup>1</sup> the Cornish *Jack the Tinker*,<sup>2</sup> a Milanese story of a cobbler, and the Persian *Amín of Isphahan*.<sup>3</sup> In an article on Chilian popular tales<sup>4</sup> is recorded the story of Don Juan Bolendron. This hero was a shoemaker. One day some flies worried him while drinking milk, and he killed seven with a blow of his fist. This pleased him so much that he shouted: "Very doughty am I, and henceforth I ought to be called *Don Juan Bolendron, killer-of-seven-with-one-fisticuff*." The boast reached the ears of the king, who was then much worried by a wild boar which ravaged his dominion. He sent for the shoemaker, and told him that if he could kill the beast he should have the princess for wife. The bantam cobbler sought the boar, which chased him, and he ran behind a door for safety. Some soldiers, wild with fright, fired their muskets and killed the boar, whereupon Don Juan complained to the king that he was much annoyed, as he was bringing the animal home alive! He married the princess, and on their wedding night dreamed of his work, calling out loudly of his lasts, pincers, and awl, disturbing his wife. She asked her father the king to make inquiries about her husband, as she feared he was only a shoemaker. When spoken to he replied: "Doubtless the lady princess my wife, as she was sleeping, did not understand what I was saying. I was dreaming that the wild boar had the face of a last, awls for tusks, and pincers for teeth, and that is all."

<sup>1</sup> T. Wright, "Local Legends of Shropshire."

<sup>2</sup> Hunt, *l.c.*, 60, p. 468. This worthy attains in some measure to the dignity of a culture-hero, as he taught the dressing of tin. In some of his peculiarities he partakes of the character of Wayland Smith.

<sup>3</sup> Malcolm's "Sketches of Persia," p. xvi.

<sup>4</sup> "Folklore Journal" (1885), vol. iii, pp. 289-305.

Some of the Valiant Tailor variants contain parallels of the exploits of Jack the Giant-killer. The hasty-pudding incident, for example, in which the hero induces the giant to rip open his own stomach, occurs in a Norse tale of The Youth Who Ate a Match with a Troll, in the Sicilian story of the Brave Shoemaker, and the Albanian "Bear and the Dervish."

Another incident in "Jack" is that in which he substitutes a billet of wood for himself in the bed, when he passes the night at the giant's, so that the latter strikes the log with his club, thinking it to be his guest. This is parallel with what happened when the giant Skrymer accompanied Thor on his journey to Utgard, as narrated in Chapter XII of the Edda of Snorow. It is to be noted that all these giants use stones and clubs, while Jack generally has a sword of sharpness. This falls in with the suggestion that the giant tales may come from traditions of primitive aboriginal races.

Lastly, it will be remembered that the giant recognizes that Jack is somewhere concealed, saying:—

Fee, fi, fo, fum,  
I smell the blood of an Englishman !<sup>1</sup>

This is a "smelling-out formula" that is very old and universal in cannibal tales, occurring in Asiatic, European, Zuni, Eskimo, Maori, Zulu, and other stories. Lang<sup>2</sup> traces it to the "Eumenides" of Æschylus, where the Furies "smell out" Orestes. Macculloch remarks<sup>3</sup>: "It is obvious that, while the close likeness of the formula might suggest borrowing, it really arises out of the 'manner of primitive man,' as of savages—viz., the extraordinarily keen sense of smell which they possess, and which we have lost."

<sup>1</sup> In some cannibalistic tales it is "the blood of an earthly one."

<sup>2</sup> C. Perrault, "Popular Tales" (1888), p. cvii.

<sup>3</sup> *I.c.*, p. 805 *note*.

§ 6. *Jack and the Beanstalk*

When as a child I read the story of Jack and the Beanstalk it always somehow connected itself in my mind with that of the Tower of Babel. I did not know then how closely I had divined the truth of its origin. The story is, indeed, an example of the connection between mythology and folk-tale; "a primitive mythological way of regarding the universe has suggested and given rise to the chief incident of our well-known nursery tale."<sup>1</sup> It is surprising that in his remarks upon Jack and the Beanstalk Macculloch has not mentioned the Biblical story of Babel, which is an instance of double myth, one of which is derived from the same source as that of Jack.<sup>2</sup>

Before dealing with the evolution of this tale, it will be convenient to call to mind its incidents. Jack is the idle son of a needy widow. To pay the rent, she sends him to market to sell her only cow. Meeting a man on the way, Jack readily exchanges the cow for a handful of brightly coloured beans which catch his fancy. The disappointed widow vents her anger by flinging the beans out of the window and sending the boy supperless to bed. On waking next morning he finds that during the night a mighty beanstalk has sprung up, so high that its top is lost in the skies. Up the vegetable ladder Jack climbs, to find himself, when he reaches the summit, in another world. There he meets a fairy who tells him that it is inhabited by a giant who slew his father and appropriated his inheritance, and that Jack is to be his parent's avenger. The boy reaches the giant's castle and is taken in and hidden by the monster's compassionate wife. He steals the giant's gold-laying hen and returns home. Next day he ascends the beanstalk again and succeeds in taking the giant's bags of gold. A third time he ventures and runs off with the giant's golden, self-playing harp;

<sup>1</sup> Macculloch, *l.c.*, p. 432.

<sup>2</sup> See my "Story of the Bible," p. 107.

but as he does so this prototype of the modern auto-piano cries out "Master!", and the giant, awakened, pursues Jack down the beanstalk. Jack reaches the ground, seizes an axe, cuts through the foot of the stalk so that it gives way and the giant crashes to earth, dead, and the road to the land above the skies is thus lost for ever.

Of these occurrences, the thefts from the giant, the gold-producing animal, the talking musical instrument, and the death of the monster are familiar fairy-tale incidents, as I have already pointed out. The opening incident of the foolish bargain is also often met with, leading either to ruin or fortune. The peculiarity of the story is the beanstalk, or tree, which is clearly borrowed from some earlier story to lend additional interest to another tale—that is to say, there is a Magic Tree group of stories. The usual form of this series is that a poor man possesses a magic bean which, planted, grows into a tree by which he reaches heaven. There he meets Peter, who gives him magic objects which help him to fortune. This occurs in Tuscan, Breton, Lorrainian (in which God takes Peter's place), and Flemish versions. In a Corsican variant the man finds a country in which a tall chestnut tree provides him with the required route to realms celestial.

Certain Slavonic versions, which Macculloch considers as coming nearer to the primitive form, explain Slavonic ideas of a future life, which are the relics of earlier pagan beliefs. Beyond the sky is a land of supernatural beings into which mortals have penetrated and returned laden with valuable gifts. In one tale it is reached by means of a tall cabbage (possibly one of the Jersey variety!); in others the plant is a pea or a bean. In several Russian variants the mortal finds food watched by a goat with seven eyes. By means of the formula mentioned in connection with the Cinderella cycle (p. 68),

Shut one eye, shut two eyes,  
Shut your eyes in deep sleep,

the hero charms the goat, but neglects to charm its seventh eye, and it calls out "Master."

These tales point to primitive myths concerning the relations between the earth and the world above the sky. It is such a myth, incorporated with another to account for linguistic variations, that went to make the story of the Tower of Babel. The means by which heaven is reached is sometimes a magic tree, sometimes a mountain. An example of the former is a Dyak story,<sup>1</sup> which relates how there was once a time when men ate only fungi. A party with a certain man named Si Jura found a tree growing out of the sky, its branches touching a whirlpool. Si Jura climbed into it, and finally reached the country of the Pleiades. Here he met Si Kira, who offered him boiled rice, which Si Jura mistook for maggots. On his return Si Jura, instructed by Si Kira, taught his people cultivation, thus becoming a culture-hero. The Dyaks, it may be added, arrange their cultivation operations by the position of the Pleiades. Similar tales are told by the Australians, Samoans, and Melanesians, the first two using a mountain top as the method of reaching the celestial regions.

In some Polynesian stories of climbs heavenward by magic trees or other means the ascent is made to recover a lost wife, and here occurs a connection with some of the Swan-maiden cycle, as in the Algonquin Star's Daughter tale and the Arawak story. In others it occurs in connection with tales of how the sun was captured by a mortal; in these the sky is not always reached by a tree—for instance, in a creation legend of the Tawnyans, one of the Chin group of Mongols,<sup>2</sup> a kind of pole ladder was built. Trees occur in Red Indian legends and in the *Kalevala* (the Finnish native epic). In a Tusayan (North America) story a magic growth of cane springs from a seed, recalling Jack's beans.

<sup>1</sup> H. Ling Roth, "The Natives of Sarawak and Borneo" (1896), vol. i, p. 307.

<sup>2</sup> A. H. Keane, *l.c.*, p. 184.

The leading incident in all these stories is derived from the primitive conception of the heavens as a dome over the earth which can be reached. This conception was probably one of the first replies made by man to his own continual inquiries as to the nature of the world around him. Such ideas exist among all savage peoples; they imagine that the heavens form a canopy in which are set the heavenly bodies, and that at some former time they were separated from the earth. To detail all the known versions of this belief would fill a volume. To the savage, who is the child of the race, heaven is much nearer than it is to his civilized descendant. The modern baby holds out its hands for the moon, and cries because he cannot have it; and my own little son has asked if the sky touched the chimney-pots. Hood's pathetic little poem—

I remember, I remember,  
The fir trees dark and high;  
I used to think their slender tops  
Were close against the sky.  
It was a childish ignorance;  
But now 'tis little joy  
To know I'm farther off from heav'n  
Than when I was a boy—

exactly illustrates the difference between the primitive man and his civilized representative: to the former belongs the "childish ignorance," to the latter the disillusionment. To the Polynesians heaven and earth were once man and wife, and were separated by their children, one of whom, Tane-Mahuta (who, be it marked, was the forest god), planted his head on mother-earth and his feet against the sky.<sup>1</sup> The early Egyptians regarded heaven as a rectangular slab of iron, or alabaster, forming the sky, and supported upon four pillars kept in position and presided over by the four sons of Horus. From this the stars hung by hooks, like lamps from a ceiling, and a star was thus represented in hieroglyph.<sup>2</sup> To such

<sup>1</sup> Sir G. Gray, "Polynesian Mythology" (1857), chap. i.

<sup>2</sup> A. E. Wallis Budge, "Guide to the Egyptian Collns. in the Brit. Mus." (1909), p. 145.



primitive conceptions of heaven the natural corollary was that there must be some method of reaching it. The Japanese believed that an arrow shot from the earth could reach the sky and make a hole in it; the Egyptians that the righteous ascended to heaven by means of a ladder, and even Osiris himself was obliged to use one. The pagan Slavs considered that the dead reached Paradise by climbing a steep mountain of glass; and this glass mountain figures in Slavonic and Scandinavian fairy-tales as an obstacle to be surmounted by the hero in his task of rescuing the princess. The Biblical stories of the Tower of Babel and of Jacob's Ladder reflect similar primitive ideas as to the means of reaching heaven, and in Jack and the Beanstalk we have a folk-tale in which the idea is the leading incident. Further, it is noteworthy in all these fairy-tales that stress is laid upon the destruction of the means of access to and descent from the upper regions, and the persistence of this is probably due to the fact that at the time they began to be told the impossibility of ever reaching the sky was becoming increasingly evident to man.

### § 7. *The Fortunate Youngest Son*

A very popular and widespread hero-story is that in which the central figure is a son or daughter who is the youngest of a family, usually of three children. This youngest son is often a simpleton, but attains to fortune; in some cases, however, stress is laid upon his superior cleverness. I have already had occasion to refer to stories of this type, and Macculloch points out<sup>1</sup> that in a collection of fifty-three Magyar tales no less than twenty-one deal with this incident, and that "in other collections the same large proportion is met with. It is obvious that all this has not happened by chance, but has originated out of some definite cause."

<sup>1</sup> *l.c.*, p. 350.

It remains to summarize in this section certain important points in this Fortunate Youngest Son cycle, and to give reasons for its prevalence.

Macculloch divides these stories into eleven classes, into the details of which it is unnecessary to enter here. Certain important examples must, however, be given. A well-known type is a story of which Russia possesses several variants. Briefly told, a certain king's deer-park was ravaged by a "Norka"—one of the monsters so common in fairy-tale. The two elder sons watched for it, but slept owing to an over-indulgence in vodka; the youngest son was a simple fellow, but he kept awake and wounded the Norka, which he followed to the underworld, whither his brothers refused to accompany him. There he saw the monster's three lovely daughters, who provided him with the Water of Strength and a steel sword. He cut off the brute's head, and, tying the daughters in succession to a rope, they were pulled up to earth by the brothers, who then basely left the hero to his fate. From his wanderings in the realms below he was delivered by a bird in gratitude for his kindness to her little ones, and he returned, carrying with him the dresses of the three girls. Back on earth, he became assistant to a tailor. The brothers had meanwhile continued their treachery, and proposed to marry the rescued ladies, but the latter refused unless they could have copies made of their dresses. The tailor's assistant did better: he supplied the original ones, to their astonishment; and, the youngest sister discovering his identity, he married all three, while the treacherous brothers were punished.

Other variants of this story are of Serbian, Greek, Sicilian, Spanish, Celtic, and Syriac origin; one, "The Three Robes of Wonder," from the Isle of Lesbos, is to be found in "Fairy-Tales, Far and Near."<sup>1</sup> A North

<sup>1</sup> By Sir A. Quiller-Couch (n.d.), p. 11.

German variant contains the glass mountain incident referred to in the last Section. In one group Dove-maidens are introduced. Another has been already noticed when discussing the Water of Life; and this version, which belongs strictly to those next to be considered, is universal in Europe and has also Hindu variants. In all these stories the elder brothers act with the grossest treachery, and usually a sister or mother is carried off by a monster and the brothers go in succession to her rescue. Childe Roland is a Youngest Son story of this type (see p. 11).

In one series of Youngest Son stories there is involved a quest. The Scots story of Mally Whuppie<sup>1</sup> is a good example. This heroine and her two elder sisters are sent away from home. Reaching the abode of a giant, she observes that the monster places straw ropes round their necks at bedtime and gold necklaces round those of his own daughters.<sup>2</sup> She exchanges these ornaments, so that the giant kills his own children by mistake. The three girls then come to a king's palace, where Mally tells her story. Praising her cleverness, the king promises her that if she steals the giant's sword her eldest sister shall marry his eldest son. She succeeds, and then has to steal his pillow and his ring, the second daughter getting the second and herself the youngest son as rewards. She performs the first of these tasks, but fails temporarily in the last, the giant catching her. However, by wheedling the giant's wife into taking her place, she escapes with the ring, and so wins her promised husband. In this tale a heroine takes the place of the hero of the majority of the variants, in which jealous elder brothers traduce the youngest to the king and contrive that he shall be sent to steal an ogre's treasure; he succeeds, and marries the king's daughter. There are Norse, Swedish,

<sup>1</sup> J. J. Jacobs, *l.c.*, p. 125.

<sup>2</sup> The famous Hop o' My Thumb is a variant of this story.

Greek, Sicilian, and Italian versions, in the last of which the fortunate youth is the youngest of thirteen. In some variants (Persian and Turkish) the elder brothers are replaced by jealous courtiers. In others the brothers fail (as in the Water of Life story) because they are impolite to a dwarf or rudely refuse help to certain animals, the youngest brother readily acceding to the requests made by them and consequently as readily obtaining their assistance. In some of the Cinderella stories the heroine is a stepdaughter or a youngest sister, and it is her sisters who are jealous. There is a unique Greek example of the jealous sisters type, quoted by Macculloch from Garnett,<sup>1</sup> in which a mother preferred her youngest daughter, wherefore the two elder ones killed and ate the mother. The heroine married a prince, and when her child was born the elder sisters stuck a needle into her head and buried her, and one of them, Maro by name, took her place. A bird came out of the grave and taunted Maro with her infamy, and she made her husband shoot it. From three drops of its blood which fell to earth sprang an apple tree, and in one of the apples was found the true bride. The impostor Maro was justly, if drastically, punished by being ground to powder. A Malagasy Cinderella story, which is of ancient date,<sup>2</sup> describes how three sisters sought a bridegroom. The youngest was ill-treated by her two elders, but was given beautiful dresses by a rat on three evenings in succession, with golden slippers added on the third occasion. She left one of these slippers behind in true Cinderella fashion, and was thus discovered. She married the prince, and her cruel sisters were changed into lizards. Jealous sisters figure in a large number of tales—Sicilian, Catalan, German, Tyrolese, Italian, Albanian, Ava, Arab, Breton, Basque, Hungarian, Serbian, Icelandic, Basuto, etc. In some of the Cupid and Psyche stories, as has

<sup>1</sup> Miss L. Garnett, "Greek Folk Poesy" (1896), vol. ii, p. 116.

<sup>2</sup> G. Ferrand, "Contes Populaires Malgaches" (1893), p. 123.

been already noted, the broken tabu which results in the loss of the husband is due to the malice of jealous elder sisters. Another group of jealous sister tales belongs to the Value of Salt type of the Outcast Child cycle (see Chapter V); in allied stories, as in the Joseph type, the sex is changed.

In one class of stories, which Macculloch takes as the last of his eleven types, light is "thrown upon the origin of the idea of the despised but clever youngest son." The example given is a Mingrelian tale.<sup>1</sup> A king told his three sons that when he died they were to watch his tomb for a week each and give their three sisters "to whoso shall ask for them." The eldest prince watched, and saw something swoop down, dig up the royal corpse, weep over it, and re-bury it. The second brother had a similar experience, and both kept silence concerning it. Meanwhile the youngest incensed his elders by giving the sisters to three strangers, and they at first refused to allow him to take his turn at watching. When at last he performed his vigil and the usual visitor appeared, he slew it with his sword. But its blood extinguished his light. He went to relight it at a distant fire; this fire belonged to certain demis (spirits), who forced him to go with them and capture a king's three daughters. He ascended the ladder first and killed the demis as they came up. He then gave a ring to each of the king's three daughters and stuck his sword into a stone. Next day the king sent to see who could pull out the sword, and the hero was the only one who accomplished it. To him and his brothers were given the three daughters. His wife was stolen by a master-demi, but after many adventures, in which he was helped by his sisters' husbands, themselves demis, he finally overcame him. There are numerous variants of this story, including a Dyak version, in which the incidents of the light and capture are nearly identical.

<sup>1</sup> Miss Wardrop, "Georgian Folk-Tales," p. 112.

The above remarks give but an outline of the very numerous Fortunate Youngest Son stories, and I must pass on to the problem of their origin. This lies partly in the desire to excite sympathy for the despised youngest son, and partly, according to Lang,<sup>1</sup> in the fact that "in adventures, if there is to be accumulating interest, some one must fail; the elder sons would attempt the adventure first; consequently the youngest must be the successful hero." These reasons are, however, not sufficient. According to Elton,<sup>2</sup> Lang,<sup>3</sup> and Macculloch,<sup>4</sup> the point of departure lies in the fact that the youngest born was originally the heir—a position which he gradually lost with changing social conditions. He would thus be regarded by many as an heir deprived of his rights, so that a sentimental feeling for him would arise. This is evident from many of the Youngest Son stories, in which the elder brothers deprive their junior not of his inheritance so much as of the credit which should be his. Sometimes it is the inheritance of which he is deprived, as in the Norse story of Boots, in which his two brothers annexed everything but the kneading-trough, which had, however, magical powers that enabled him to perform tasks imposed upon him by the king, egged on thereto by his jealous brothers. The same idea occurs in a Senegambian tale,<sup>5</sup> in which the youngest son is cheated by his two brothers, who, finding him asleep, said that he had chosen sleep and must be content therewith. One day he saw his eldest brother sleeping and killed him, arguing naively that by law he must die because he had stolen the sleep which was his inheritance. The second brother immediately ran away, and the youngest became the heir.

The youngest son was indeed once the principal heir,

<sup>1</sup> Introduction to Miss Cox's "Cinderella," p. xiii.

<sup>2</sup> C. Elton, "Origins of English History" (1890), p. 184.

<sup>3</sup> Introduction to "Perrault," p. xcviii.

<sup>4</sup> *l.c.*, p. 371.

<sup>5</sup> B. Thorpe, *l.c.*, p. 253.

and the custom still survives under the title of *Borough-English*—in France called *Maineté* and *Juveignerie*, and in Germany *Jüngsten-recht*. In Belgium this, to us, curious custom still obtains at Grimberghe in Brabant; in Germany in Westphalia, Silesia, and Wurtemberg. It survives, or did until recently, to some extent also in Russia and Hungary and among the Saxons of Transylvania. According to Elton,<sup>1</sup> the name of "Borough-English" is taken from a local word used in a trial at the time of Edward III. It appears, from the Year Book for the first year of that reign, that in Nottingham there were then two tenures of land, called *burgh-Engloyes* and *burgh-Francoyes*, "and the usages of these tenures were such that all the tenements whereof the ancestor died seised in *burgh-Engloyes* ought to descend to the youngest son, and all tenements in *burgh-Francoyes* to the eldest son, as at common law." This division is alleged to have remained in Nottingham until as late as 1713, and similar customs are said to exist in the neighbourhood at present. Borough-English continued in Leicester until 1255, when it was altered on a petition of the inhabitants. Collinson<sup>2</sup> states that in the manor of Taunton-Dene, in Somerset, if a tenant die without a widow and leaves more than one son, "the youngest hath used to inherit the lands as sole heir to his father; and so likewise of daughters, if he die without issue male, the youngest daughter ought to inherit the same as sole heir to her father." The youngest son in Wales, by the ancient laws of Hoel, received the homestead and the best of the implements; in Shetland he got the dwelling-house, in Ireland the harp and chessboard. According to Sir James Frazer,<sup>3</sup> the story in which Esau was cozened out of his inheritance by Jacob is a reflection of this custom. In Kent<sup>4</sup> the manorial law allots to the youngest son or to the youngest daughter "the hearth place in the homestead

<sup>1</sup> *l.c.*

<sup>2</sup> "History of Somerset," vol. iii, p. 233.

<sup>3</sup> "Folklore in the Old Testament."

<sup>4</sup> Elton, *l.c.*, p. 189.

and as far as forty feet around it." In this last quotation lies a key to the custom of the heirship of the youngest son to the home; and it is noteworthy that, in fairy-tale, to the youngest child is often allotted a special connection with the hearth, as witness Cinderella and Boots in the Norse tale, or that he received the domestic utensils. It is a survival of the primitive custom by which descent was reckoned through the mother—the Matriarchate. As the elders grew up, they went out into the world to find their own place and fortune; they were "provided for," while the last-born remained at home. Possibly his simple nature in fairy-tale is due to this, for "home-keeping youths have ever homely wits." It was the last-born who, when his parent died, performed the funeral rites; it was he who watched by the grave. Even when in fairy-tale the others take their turn at watching by the father's tomb, it is always the youngest who keeps awake or is the more watchful. When the opposite custom, the Patriarchate, gradually came into prominence, the law of Primogeniture, by which the eldest took the place of the youngest, was evolved. The change was slow, but the elders were eager to claim their new right, and so the youngest born became the despised and disinherited. It was here that the sympathy with him came in, and, as Macculloch remarks<sup>1</sup>: "We might almost say that such stories were invented to stem the tide of the new law; at all events they became immensely popular, and long after the time of the conflicting heirships passed, the formula of the despised but clever youngest son was attached to new stories, and became almost the inevitable introduction to a vast series of folk-tales." In a very few stories the youngest son is made the villain, and this may have been due to the fact that, "long after the claim of the youngest son had passed away, the teller of folk-tales found some variety in making the youngest son the villain."

<sup>1</sup> *l.c.*, p. 377.



## CHAPTER XI

### SOME MISCELLANEOUS TALES

"Of Butterfly's wings his shirt was made,  
His boots of chicken's hide;  
And by a nimble fairy blade,  
Well learned in the tailoring trade,  
His clothing was supplied.—  
A needle dangled by his side;  
A dapper mouse he used to ride,  
Thus strutted Tom in stately pride!"  
—"Old Chap Book" (circa 1820).

#### § 1. *Tom Thumb and Red Riding-Hood*

THERE are a few tales, popular among English children, which have not yet been mentioned, and with these I propose to deal in this concluding Chapter. Tom Thumb and Red Riding-Hood belong to the same cycle of stories, although at first sight they may not appear to have anything in common. First sights are, however, apt to be superficial and untrustworthy. Both belong to what is known as the Swallow cycle, which Macculloch<sup>1</sup> has divided into five groups, as follows:—

1. *Tom Thumb*. This is an English fairy-tale of the Droll class, with several foreign variants. Tom Thumb, who is described in our own version as living in the time of King Arthur (see p. 20), and being born by the magic of Merlin, is swallowed by a cow, a giant, a fish, a miller, and a salmon, by all of whom he is safely disgorged, save in the cases of the two fish, from which he is cut when they are prepared for table. He dies in the end by the poisonous breath of a spider, when

He fell dead on the ground where he stood,  
And the spider suck'd every drop of his blood.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *l.c.*, p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> Hartland, "English Folk- and Fairy-Tales," p. 281.

Other versions are given by Deulin,<sup>1</sup> Cosquin,<sup>2</sup> and in Grimm's "Thumblin."

2. *Red Riding-Hood*. This was a German story originally, although, like many other German productions, it has become "naturalized" in England. In Grimm's collection it will be found under the title of Red Cap. In the earlier versions the wolf swallowed the heroine as well as the grandmother (as a savoury follows the *pièce de résistance* !), and the former was restored when the animal was killed. Ralston<sup>3</sup> narrates a parallel story in which a Baba Yaga swallows two brothers and is made to return them by the third brother.

3. *Animal Swallowers*. In these an animal, usually a fox or a wolf, swallows several others (kids, goslings, etc.). In some versions the beast sleeps, and the mother of the victims cuts him open and removes them, filling his stomach with stones. When he wakes he is thirsty, and, endeavouring to drink, overbalances owing to the weight of the stones, and is drowned. In others he is killed and the victims are not returned to life. There are Australian, Hottentot, Basuto, and other South African variants, and Tremearne<sup>4</sup> points out that in that continent the incident of men and animals delivered from the stomach of a monster is very common. The stories in this group resemble those in the next.

4. *The Gluttonous Child*. The type tale here is a Bohemian one,<sup>5</sup> in which a peasant formed a child from a root with his axe. This unnatural monster ate his parents, the villagers, and some animals, until he was killed, when the victims came out in the reverse order to which they were swallowed. There are Tartar, Australian, Kaffir, and Yao variants. As Lang<sup>6</sup> pointed out, the stories resemble the Greek myth of Kronos, who

<sup>1</sup> O. Deulin, "Contes d'un Buveur de Bière" (1870), p. 326.

<sup>2</sup> E. Cosquin, "Contes Populaires de Lorraine" (n.d.), vol. ii, p. 90.

<sup>3</sup> *l.c.*, p. 72. <sup>4</sup> "Hausa Superstitions and Customs," p. 365.

<sup>5</sup> J. T. Naake, "Slavonic Fairy-Tales" (1874), p. 226.

<sup>6</sup> A. Lang, "Custom and Myth" (1893), p. 53.

swallowed his children until Zeus substituted a stone for himself and thus made him disgorge them. In a Bushman myth the planet Jupiter swallows his daughter (another star), returning her when she is grown up.

5. *Jonah and the Whale*. This Biblical story has Hindu, Malay, Samoan, Guinea, and Red Indian versions. I have quoted elsewhere<sup>1</sup> other variants from New Guinea and from Lifu and Luvea (Loyalty Islands). The first of these is given by Sir James Frazer, who has also recorded<sup>2</sup> the following curious Bechuana tale. A man had a daughter called Tsélané. One day the family and their flocks set off to seek new pastures. Tsélané, however, refused to go, telling her mother: "I won't go. Our house is so pretty, with the red and white beads, that I can't leave it." The mother said: "My child, since you are naughty, you may stay here all alone, but shut the door fast, in case the Marimos (a cannibal tribe) come and eat you." She stayed, the mother coming several times to bring her food, which the daughter, knowing her voice, took in. One day the voice was gruff, and she laughed, and said: "Go away, naughty Marimo"; and he went. He lit a big fire, heated an iron hoe red-hot, swallowed it to clear his voice, and tried again. The girl was still not deceived, so he swallowed another red-hot hoe. The second application of this somewhat drastic remedy was successful; his now softened voice deceived the girl, and he popped her into his bag. Feeling thirsty (probably because his throat was overheated), he left the bag in the care of some little girls, and went to get beer. The girls peeped into the bag, saw Tsélané, and ran off to tell her mother. The latter came, let her daughter out, and stuffed the bag with a dog, scorpions, vipers, broken glass, and stones. The Marimo was pursued, but he ran out of his home, threw himself into a mudheap

<sup>1</sup> "The Story of the Bible," p. 126.

<sup>2</sup> "A South African Red Riding-Hood," "Folklore Journal" (1889), vol. vii, p. 167.

and changed himself into a tree, in whose bark bees made honey; and in the spring girls came and gathered the honey to make into honey-cakes.

Tylor<sup>1</sup> suggested that the clue to the origin of all the Swallow stories may be supplied by the Polynesian story of Maui, who was cast at his birth into the sea by his mother, where he became covered with seaweed and jelly-fish. He was cast ashore, when his grandfather cleansed and carried him home. In Polynesian mythology Maui is the sun, and the earth and sea a fish. "It is thought that this story may be a distorted version of a myth telling how the sky frees the sun from the covering earth. If so, the distortion is somewhat pronounced. But the supposition gains force from another Maui story, which tells how he met his death by entering his grandmother's body. She dwells on the horizon where earth meets the sky. But some hold that Maui dies only to revive and recommence his career."<sup>2</sup> The Swallow stories resolve themselves, therefore, into primitive myths to account for the rising and setting of the sun, possibly supplying the inventive story-teller with a groundwork upon which to found the tales which we have been considering.

## § 2. *The Pied Piper of Hameln*

Although an exotic, The Pied Piper is another story which enjoys some popularity among English children. It has been dealt with chiefly by Baring-Gould.<sup>3</sup> Briefly, the story tells how Hameln town was infested with rats in 1284 (it is interesting to note how precise the legend-monger is with his dates). The Piper came, and was called "Bunting," from the parti-coloured suit he wore. Stating that he was a rat-catcher, he offered to rid the place of its vermin for a certain sum of money. His

<sup>1</sup> Sir E. B. Tylor, "Early History of Mankind" (1865).

<sup>2</sup> Macculloch, *l.c.*, p. 50.

<sup>3</sup> S. Baring Gould, "Curious Myths of the Middle Ages" (1872), p. 417.

services were accepted, he pulled out his pipe, commenced to play, and the rats followed his music until he reached the river Weser, "wherein all plunged and perished." Rid of their plague, the people cried out upon their deliverer as a sorcerer, and refused to pay. The Piper vowed vengeance, and on the feast of Saints John and Paul he reappeared. Again the sound of his pipe was heard in the Hameln street, and the children of the town followed him into a hill, the door of which shut, and they perished to the number of one hundred and thirty. Only two remained, one dumb and one blind; and Hameln is said to have dated its public documents from the calamity.

Similar stories are told of Brandenburg (where the piper becomes a fiddler), Lorch, and the Hartz Mountains. At Lorch the story assumes a semi-religious guise. The town was infested with ants, and a holy hermit piped them away on the strength of a promise from the townsfolk to spend a hundred gulden on a chapel. The promise was broken, and the hermit piped again, so that all the pigs—other than the citizens—followed, and were lost. Next year crickets were the nuisance, and the hermit, disguised as a charcoal-burner, again relieved the town; and the promise, increased to five hundred gulden, was again broken. This time it was the sheep that the hermit charmed away. In the third year the plague was, like that of Hameln, rats. The hermit, appearing as an old man of the mountain, raised his price to a thousand gulden, and piped the rats into the Tannenburg. The repudiation of their liabilities seems to have become a habit with the citizens of Lorch—it is a Teutonic failing—and their third evasion lost them all their children.

In the Hartz Mountains there is a tradition of a bagpiper who passed through from time to time. Each time he played a maiden died. Fifty deaths were thus caused, and then he vanished with their souls. A similar story from Abyssinia tells of demon pipers riding

upon goats, whose music irresistibly draws children to destruction. Goethe's well-known ballad of the Erl-king belongs to the same type of story; the child carried by his father hears the Erl-king's song, and is dead when the agonized parent reaches home. The idea of such unearthly music is common in Germany, where it is attributed to elves, and children are cautioned not to listen to it lest Frau Holle (originally the pagan goddess Hulda) take them. The classical story of Ulysses and the Sirens, and that of Orpheus with his lute, belong to the same category. According to Baring-Gould, whose remarks upon the paganism of English dissenters I have quoted in my first Chapter (p. 27), a trace of the myth of the unearthly singing which it is death to hear remains among Wesleyans. Thus a Wesleyan said that he knew his little servant girl was going to die because he had heard an angel piping to her; and Baring-Gould knew personally several cases of Wesleyans who asserted that they were about to pass away because they heard angels singing.

It cannot fail to be noted that in several of the German legends just cited rats figure; and it is significant that the soul in German mythology is supposed to bear some analogy to a mouse. In fairy-tales mice and rats may be taken generally as synonymous. Lang has pointed out<sup>1</sup> that Apollo was constantly associated with a mouse, and that his name Apollo Smintheus<sup>2</sup> might be rendered "Mouse Apollo," or "Apollo, Lord of Mice." He suggests that the ancients invented mouse stories to account for this. A myth of the Troad accounted for the worship of Apollo Smintheus on the hypothesis that he once freed the land from these vermin. Baring-Gould asks the question: Did Apollo Smintheus charm them away with his lyre? Mice have been worshipped in past ages, and there have been mouse totems and mouse family names. In India the mouse is sacred to Rudra,

<sup>1</sup> "Custom and Myth," p. 103.

<sup>2</sup> "Iliad," bk. i, p. 39.

the "Howler," a Vedic god of storm, and "the wild huntsman of Hindu mythology."

Upon this evidence, let us see what Baring-Gould made of the Pied Piper story and its variants. He considered that the piper is the wind, and the ancients held that in the wind were the souls of the dead. All over England the peasants believed that the spirits of unbaptized children wander in the wind, and wail at the doors and windows. The pagan goddess Hulda (Dame Holle) was always accompanied by a crowd of children's souls. The very words used for "soul" means breath, and Clodd<sup>1</sup> gives the following: Western Australian *wang* (breath, spirit, soul), Javan *nawa* (breath, life, soul), Dakota *niya* (breath), Notela *piuts* (breath), Eskimo *silla* (air, wind), Aztec *ehcate* (air, life, soul), Mohawk *atonritz* (soul, from *atonrian*, to breathe), Latin *animus* and Greek *anemus* (cognate with *anima*, air), and others. Similarly, the word "ghost" is the same as the German *geist*, from the root *gisan*, to gust or blow. So the spirit once freed from the body returns whence it came—the wind. In Slavonic tales the magic instrument which lulls to sleep is the whistling autumn wind, and the magic harp which restores everything to life and vigour is the spring breeze.

But the wind not only pipes and carries with it the souls of the dead; it also makes things dance, as any one who watches the trees and grasses on a breezy day may see. So in Grimm's story of the fiddling boy and the Jew, and a similar tale of a piping hero among the modern Greeks. So also Oberon's horn in the medieval romance of Huon de Bordeaux and Bosi's harp in the Icelandic Herauds ok Bosa Saga make people dance. A magic pipe causes dancing among the Quiches of Guatemala, and Orpheus with his lute could

Make tigers tame, and huge leviathans  
Forsake unsounded deeps to dance on sands.

<sup>1</sup> "Myths and Dreams," p. 199.

This Orpheus myth was so charming and elegant that the early Christians retained it, and it is scattered among the Aryan and Turanian peoples.

### § 3. *Aladdin*

According to Clouston,<sup>1</sup> the story of Aladdin does not occur in any known Arabian text of "The Thousand and One Nights," although the chief incidents are found in many Asiatic fictions and had become orally current in Greece and Italy. A popular Italian version, told in Miss Busk's "Folklore of Rome," is "How Cajusse was Married," and contains a Separable Soul incident relating to the magician, who states that in a far-distant forest is a hydra with seven heads; in the middle head is a leveret, in the head of the leveret is a bird, in the bird is a precious stone. If this stone be placed beneath his pillow, the magician would die. Other versions are Grimm's "Blue Light," from Mecklenburg, which probably inspired Hans Andersen's "The Tinder Box" and the Hungarian "Wonderful Tobacco Pipe." Most of the remaining versions belong to the Grateful Beasts stories, as, for example, a Bohemian tale which also fits into the Fortunate Younger Son cycle.<sup>2</sup> In this Jenik is a despised youngest son who saves a serpent, a dog, and a cat from the cruel mob. The first gave him an enchanted watch from the king of the serpents. By rubbing it he obtains a palace and marries a princess, who, however, does not love him. She finds out the secret of the watch, and so transports herself and the palace to a distant place. Two crows tell Jenik where she is, and the dog and cat help him to reach the spot. The cat steals the watch, and the dog swims with her on his back across the sea. Unfortunately, the dog asks the cat while on the journey if she has the watch, and it

<sup>1</sup> *l.c.*, vol. i, p. 314.

<sup>2</sup> L. Leger, "Recueil de Contes Populaires Slaves" (1882), No. 15.



falls into the water when she opens her mouth to reply. But she forces a fish to retrieve it, and Jenik, having received it, rubs it, and so causes his wife and palace to disappear, after which he lives happily with his animal friends. Other versions are Albanian, Greek, and Danish.

The original Aladdin known to English children appeared in Galland's "*Mille et une Nuits*."<sup>1</sup> There is a Turco-Arabian variant in Wortley Montague's MS. book of stories in the Bodleian which contains some elements of Galland's story with the Grateful Beast incident added. Another parallel tale occurs in a Tamil romance, and it is presumed that the story spread by means of the Ottomans into Greece and Albania and by Mongolians to North Europe.

When Galland's tale of Aladdin was published it was ascribed to his own invention—an opinion apparently confirmed when no such story could be found in the Arabic texts of the "*Nights*." Coote,<sup>2</sup> however, showed that the chief incidents of Aladdin and other stories were known in Italy before the Frenchman's work appeared, and he was of opinion that he probably heard them at Constantinople or Smyrna.

Many European and Asiatic stories of the Aladdin type illustrate fetishism in its intermediate and later forms (see p. 73), the talisman—a jewel, box, lamp, ring, etc.—being obtained either from grateful animals, bought, or perhaps found accidentally. Moreover, as

<sup>1</sup> In the British Museum Library is an interesting copy entitled "*Arabian Nights Entertainments*. Translated into French from the Arabian MSS. by M. Galland of the Royal Academy; and now done into English from the last Paris Edition. Printed in the year 1772." In the cover is a MS. note, dated 1845, stating that "This work was published in London every evening at one farthing per number and called then 'The Farthing Post' the Newsman blowing a Horn at the corner of the Street My Dear Mother took them all in and carefully collected the whole entire I consider this work to be matchless and therefore of Great Value in my family Chas. H. Hill." An interesting reminiscence of London a century and a-half ago.

<sup>2</sup> H. C. Coote, "*The Sources of Some of M. Galland's Tales*," "*Folklore Record*," vol. iii, pt. 2.

#### § 4. Cumulative Tales

1. *A kid, a kid*, my father bought  
*For two pieces of money;*  
A kid, a kid.
2. Then came *the cat*, and ate the kid  
That my father bought  
For two pieces of money;  
A kid, a kid.
3. Then came *the dog*, and bit the cat,  
That ate the kid,  
etc., etc.
4. Then came *the staff*, and beat the dog,  
etc., etc.
5. Then came *the fire*, and burned the staff,  
etc., etc.

<sup>1</sup> *l.c.*, p. 321.

<sup>3</sup> Sir E. B. Tylor, "Primitive Culture" (1891), vol. i, p. 86.

6. Then came *the water*, and quenched the fire,  
etc., etc.
7. Then came *the ox*, and drank the water,  
etc., etc.
8. Then came *the butcher*, and slew the ox,  
etc., etc.
9. Then came *the Angel of Death*, and killed the butcher,  
etc., etc.
10. Then came the HOLY ONE, blessed be He!, and  
killed the Angel of Death,  
etc., etc.

The above was given by P. N. Lieberecht, at Leipsig, in 1731, and the meaning of the hymn is this :—

1. The *kid*, as a pure animal, denotes the Hebrews.  
The *father* is Yahweh, and the *two pieces of money*  
are Moses and Aaron.
2. The *cat* is the Assyrians, who brought about the  
Captivity.
3. The *dog* is the Babylonians.
4. The *staff* is the Persians.
5. The *fire* is the Greek Empire under Alexander.
6. The *water* is the Romans.
7. The *ox* is the Saracens, who subdued Palestine.
8. The *butcher* is the Crusaders.
9. The *Angel of Death* is the Turkish Power.
10. Indicates that Yahweh will take vengeance on the  
Turks, immediately after whose overthrow the Jews  
will be restored and live under the government of  
the Messiah.

It is the general opinion that this curious Hebrew hymn is a comparatively modern interpolation in the Talmud, and it is probable that Cumulative stories were common in the East long before the Jews reduced their traditions to writing and then loaded them with commentaries.<sup>1</sup>

It can scarcely fail to be noted that in our tale of the Old Woman and her Pig we have the stick, fire, water,

<sup>1</sup> The Cumulative stories have been fully treated recently by H. Bett, in his "Nursery Rhymes and Tales" (Methuen, 1924).

and butcher of its Hebrew prototype. There are Scottish versions of the Old Woman called "The Wife and Her Bush of Berries" (with an Aberdeenshire variant of "The Wife and her Kidie"), and the story of "Moorachug and Menachaig."

Besides the Old Woman, the best-known Cumulative stories are: The House that Jack Built, Little Chicken Kluck, Tittymouse and Tattymouse, and The Strange Visitor. These are all English, as are also The Death of Cock Robin, and one beginning

John Ball shot them all,  
John Scot made the shot,  
But John Ball shot them all.

Little Chicken Kluck has a Scottish variant called The Hen and Her Fellow Travellers.<sup>1</sup>

Cumulative stories are found everywhere. In Sicily there are The Story of Pitidda and The Story of the Sexton's Nose. In the Punjab The Death and Burial of Poor Hen Sparrow recalls our own Cock Robin. The Norse examples are How They Brought Hairlock (a nanny-goat) Home, Cock and Hen a-Nutting, and The Death of Chanticleer. Madagascar has Ibotity, and others are to be met with in Roumania and Ceylon. Tremearne<sup>2</sup> mentions three—The Boy who was Lucky at Trading, The Spider Passes on a Debt, and The Lucky Youngest Son—as popular with the Hausa. The former is worth quoting, and I therefore give the final phase:—

"The boy went on and on with the Bull, until he came to a certain city, and he lodged at the house of the Chief Butcher, and the Chief Butcher said: 'Hullo, Boy, bring us your Bull that we may slaughter it.' And when the Bull had been slaughtered, and the meat had been sold, the Boy said: 'Alas! Chief Butcher, give me my

<sup>1</sup> E. Chambers, *l.c.*, p. 59.

<sup>2</sup> "Hausa Superstitions and Customs," pp. 237, 367, 380.

Bull,' and the other said: 'Which Bull?' The Boy said: 'The Bull that the Filani Youth gave me.' 'Which Filani Youth?' asked the other. 'The Filani Youth who took my potash,' he replied. 'Which potash?' asked the other. And the Boy replied: 'The potash that the Man-with-the-tobacco gave me.' 'Which Man-with-the-tobacco?' asked the other. 'The Man-with-the-tobacco who used up my butter,' he replied. 'Which butter?' asked the other. 'The butter that the Filani Maiden gave me.' 'Which Filani Maiden?' asked the other. 'The Filani Maiden who drank up my millet-flour,' he replied. 'Which millet-flour?' asked the Chief Butcher. 'The millet-flour that the Reapers gave me,' he answered. 'Which Reapers?' he asked. 'The Reapers who took my sickle.' 'Which sickle?' he asked. And he replied: 'The sickle which the Farmers gave me.' 'Which Farmers?' he asked. 'The Farmers who killed my little scorpion,' he replied. Then he said: 'Which little scorpion?' And he answered: 'The little scorpion which my Father gave me as food for the journey.' So the Chief Butcher took two slaves and gave them to him, a Male and a Female. When he had got them the Boy returned to his Father's house, and said to his Father: 'The trading has been successful; I have returned.' He had obtained two Slaves for his little Scorpion."

A similar tale is told in Sierra Leone, by the Damaras, Zulus, Kabyles, Anyanja, and in Europe in Malta, Brittany, and Kasan. It reminds one, but in a converse way, of the English droll, Mr. Vinegar, whose trading led to disaster rather than to success.

#### § 5. *Teeny-Tiny*

Teeny-Tiny is the story of the little old woman who found a bone in the churchyard, took it home, and put it in a cupboard with the intention of making soup from it. She retired to bed, and was awakened by a voice saying,

"Give me my bone!" This frightened her, and she covered her head with the bedclothes. The cry was twice repeated, each time louder than the last. The third occasion she threw the bone out of the window, calling out "Take it!" The original story is given by Halliwell,<sup>1</sup> who states: "It was obtained from oral tradition, and has not, I believe, been printed." Hunt<sup>2</sup> gives a Cornish variant telling how an old lady went to the church in the sands of Perranzabulœ, and there found some very good teeth. She pocketed them, and placed them on her dressing table before getting into bed. She was repeatedly disturbed in the night by a voice calling out, "Give me my teeth!" until she was terrified into throwing them out of the window, exclaiming: "Drat the teeth, take 'em." As soon as they fell upon the road hasty retreating footsteps were heard, and the demands for the teeth ceased.

Halliwell considers that Teeny-Tiny is probably a droll, but it has some affinity with the many stories in which a talking bone occurs, the discussion of which will be found in Chapter IV.

### § 6. *Conclusion*

I have now passed in review the most popular English fairy-tales and their numerous foreign variants, and have endeavoured to show how they originated and to explain the hidden meanings of the incidents they contain. It is my hope that I may have succeeded in arousing some interest in the fascinating study which they afford of the folklore of many peoples, and especially of the evolution of the mental make-up of ourselves as shown by the picture they furnish of the thoughts, customs, and beliefs of a long line of ancestors.

It seems to me important that some knowledge should be available in popular form concerning the origin of the

<sup>1</sup> *l.c.*, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> *l.c.*, p. 452.

belief in fairies—a belief which has existed amid the peoples of every clime, and still lingers among the uncultured peasantry of civilized nations, with whom its extinction is but a question of time. The necessity for such a knowledge was never more patent than at present, when certain people, belonging to a class usually reckoned as intelligent, are endeavouring to revive the superstition by asserting that fairies actually exist. The “Times”<sup>1</sup> recently reported an astounding account of certain proceedings at the Annual Conference of Educational Associations, when two persons showed photographs which, it was alleged, were the actual presentments of “real fairies,” some of which had wings, and one of which wore a conical cap. That such photographs can be manufactured is well known, and one expert amateur photographer has assured me that he could “fake” any “spirit” photograph under any conditions and in such a way as to defy detection. It is, to say the least of it, suspicious that the “fairies” described in the “Times” were “remarkably like those which have been customary in book illustrations.” I have myself seen a very clever photograph, frankly acknowledged to be “faked,” of the fairies introduced into the highly artistic and pleasing advertisement of a celebrated make of nightlights. My friend Mr. Joseph Sinel, the well-known biologist and anthropologist of Jersey, has written to me of a recent lecture upon “Fairies” which he attended. At this lecture, he says, “the celebrated photo by the little girls was shown on the screen. I note that one of the fairies had *bobbed hair*. It was explained that the colours of the fairy dresses—viz., *green* and *red*, are due to ‘protective colouration’ or ‘mimicry’; from which I infer that some animals may be in the habit of preying on fairies, and that those least conspicuous are the ‘best fitted to envi-

<sup>1</sup> December 30, 1922.

ronment.' Why this protective colouration is *needed* by things which have the power of *vanishing entirely*, as *needed*, was not explained."<sup>1</sup> In the "Times" report it is stated that fairies cannot speak to children, and that "their capacity appeared to be on a level with that of the domestic animals." Any reader of this book who has reached thus far will at once realize that such a verdict is against all the evidence afforded by accepted fairy-lore, whose origin has been investigated by anthropological science.

As a conclusive exposure of the absurdity of the gauzy-winged little people supposed to have been seen by Sir Conan Doyle's young friends, there may be taken the etymology of the word "fairy." As this book was going to press there appeared a short paper, too late for incorporation in Chapter I, on "Fairy Origins," by Lewis Spence.<sup>2</sup> In this the author lays stress upon the origin of the word "fairy," a matter which has hitherto received but scant attention. According to him, the name has been for generations wrongly applied. It is derived from the Middle English "faerie," or "fayrye," meaning "enchantment." This comes from the Low Latin "fata," itself a corruption of "fatum" (our "fate"). The correct word for what is popularly termed "a fairy" is "fay," "fairy" meaning simply "fairyland." Therefore, as Spence says, to speak of a fairy is as if we used "'Britain' instead of 'Briton' to denote an inhabitant of these islands."

The Roman soldiers in Gaul called their own Italian goblins "fatæ," which the Gauls corrupted into "fay." In Upper Brittany fays are still called "fates," and the French for "fairy" is "fée." As I have already pointed out (p. 10), gods and goddesses became fays, and Spence shows that this is proved by the etymology of their names. Thus, Oberon is a Gallic corruption of the

<sup>1</sup> The "Literary Guide," No. 322, April, 1923, p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> "Discovery," May, 1924, vol. v, p. 41.



Teutonic Alberich, "Elf-king," and Titania is a similar corruption of Diana. Puck is the Old English "pooka," a spirit, cognate with "spook," a ghost. Morgan le Fay, or Fata Morgana, is the Gallic-Irish "Morrigan," the "Great Queen." The absurdity of depicting fairies as tiny people with butterfly wings is thus rendered the more ridiculous, especially as the fays of Celtic folklore are of normal height. This does not, however, invalidate the theory that the dwarfish goblins, elves, and gnomes may have been derived from a smaller race of conquered aboriginals (see p. 11), although Spence is not disposed to accept this hypothesis.

## APPENDICES

I. THE WILD HUNT (page 10).—In connection with this subject, I have found recently that the spectral hounds are, in Yorkshire, called "Gabriel's Ratchets." Mr. J. Fairfax-Blakeborough, the author of "The Hand of Glory" (Grant Richards, 1924), has very kindly informed me as to the origin of the term. "Ratchet," or "Brachet," hounds were scenting hounds which *found* the game as distinguished from the hounds in leash which *ran* the quarry when started. Gabriel, the Angel of Death, sent out his ratchets to discover those persons who were about to die, and the spectral hounds warned all and sundry of impending deaths by their weird howling at night. This howling was most probably caused by the cries of wild geese.

II. THE LEGEND OF PRINCE'S TOWER (page 65).—As this book was going to press, the tumulus which bore the now-demolished Prince's Tower in Jersey, and which is known as "La Hougue Bie," was opened by the Société Jersiaise, under the supervision of my friend Mr. E. T. Nicolle. The legend concerning it was that it was once the lair of a devastating dragon. A gallant knight, the Seigneur of Hambie, crossed from Normandy to slay it. He succeeded after a desperate fight, but was murdered by his treacherous squire. The latter returned to the Seigneur's beautiful wife, and married her on the strength of his lying statement that he was solemnly enjoined to do so by his master, whom, he said, the dragon had killed. The false squire was later unmasked and executed. The tumulus, which is forty feet high and one hundred and eighty feet in diameter, has been found to contain a covered way, four feet high and five feet wide, leading to a central chamber seven feet high, thirty feet long, and twelve feet broad, the length of the whole structure being about seventy feet. Further particulars as to this magnificent discovery are not yet forthcoming, but it is evidently a sepulchral chamber, which, judging by the numerous other megalithic remains in Jersey, is of neolithic age. It is exactly the kind of relic of an earlier race which would give rise to the legends which form the nuclei of so many of our fairy-tales.



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